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ABSTRACT

This book comprises part I of the eighty-sixth annual yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education. Focusing on the theme of the ecology of school renewal, this volume consists of 12 articles by different authors. The first five articles focus on school improvement: "Structure, Process, and an Agenda" by John I. Goodlad; "Authority and Responsibility in Public Schooling" by Donna H. Kerr; "Evaluation in the Ecology of Schooling: The Process of School Renewal" by Kenneth A. Sirotnik; "Understanding School Culture" by Paul Heckman; and "The Road to School Improvement: Barriers and Bridges" by Ann Lieberman and Susan Rosenholtz. The next four articles focus on federal, state, and local responsibility: "The 1980's: States Assume Educational Leadership" by Calvin M. Frazier; "The District Role in School Renewal" by Richard C. Williams and others; "Seeing Clearly: The School as a Unit of Change" by John Henshaw and others; and "The School-Community Interface: Strategies of Community Involvement" by Richard L. Andrews. The final three articles focus on maximizing the effectiveness of the educational system: "Reporting and Using Educational Research: Conviction or Persuasion" by Margaret Buchmann; "Networking for Educational Improvement" by Beatrice A. Ward and Joseph T. Pascarelli; and "Toward a Healthy Ecosystem" by John I. Goodlad. Appended are a name index, a subject index, membership information, and a list of publications of the society. (TE)

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THE ECOLOGY OF SCHOOL RENEWAL

THE ECOLOGY OF SCHOOL RENEWAL

Eighty-sixth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education

PART I

By
THE YEARBOOK COMMITTEE
and
ASSOCIATED CONTRIBUTORS

Edited by
JOHN I. GOODLAD

Editor for the Society
KENNETH J. REHAGE

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The National Society for the Study of Education

Founded in 1901 as successor to the National Herbart Society, the National Society for the Study of Education has provided a means by which the results of serious study of educational issues could become a basis for informed discussion of those issues. The Society's two-volume yearbooks, now in their eighty-sixth year of publication, reflect the thoughtful attention given to a wide range of educational problems during those years. In 1971 the Society inaugurated a series of substantial publications on Contemporary Educational Issues to supplement the yearbooks. Each year the Society's publications contain contributions to the literature of education from more than a hundred scholars and practitioners who are doing significant work in their respective fields.

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The Society's publications are distributed each year without charge to members in the United States, Canada, and elsewhere throughout the world. The Society welcomes as members all individuals who desire to receive its publications. Information about current dues may be found in the back pages of this volume.

This volume, *The Ecology of School Renewal*, is Part I of the Eighty-sixth Yearbook of the Society. Part II, which is published at the same time, is entitled *Society as Educator in an Age of Transition*.

A listing of the Society's publications still available for purchase may be found in the back pages of this volume.

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Part One
A COMPREHENSIVE VIEW OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

CHAPTER 1

Structure, Process, and an Agenda

JOHN I. GOODLAD

Perceptions of the Improvement Process

I begin by providing three brief anecdotes. Some years ago, the State of X passed a bill designed to provide tighter coupling in its loosely coupled educational system. School districts were required to define the precise proficiencies students were to acquire at successive stages of progression to graduation. This requirement meshed with another directing that teacher education programs prepare teachers in the competencies presumed to be needed to assure the development of students' proficiencies. Together, these provisions would provide, at last, a rational educational system, relatively easy to measure and check for cost-effectiveness. Institutions complied; the objectives of school and university programs were rewritten in the form of proficiencies and competencies.

Over a period of three or four years, the improvement efforts of many states paralleled those of State X. Nonetheless, by the time most states had established and maintained such provisions for several years, concern over the quality of schooling nationwide had grown to crisis proportions. In 1983, the report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education[1] served as Sputnik had served in 1957 to stimulate in the ensuing thirty months nearly 200 state and national reports recommending changes in and for the schools—most of them to be initiated and implemented from the top down.

In State X and the others with similar requirements on the books, earlier legislation appears to have been forgotten (although compliance with those laws continued to be required.)[2] Apparently, what had appeared to be so neat and rational a few years before had not paid off in the anticipated increase in achievement test scores, in spite of the time and money spent at district and school levels in the name of compliance. One is tempted to resurrect an old phrase from management training (the so-called in-basket/out-basket procedure): garbage in, garbage out.

Our second anecdote focuses on Superintendent A who came to School District Y intent on creating a model district and a name for himself in the shortest possible period of time. It took him only a few months to decide that reading performance was low and that the primary grades were the places to make most progress in rectifying the situation. He moved quickly to require installation of a highly structured program stressing word-attack skills laid out step-by-step in the teachers' manuals and students' workbooks. The teachers—on their own time—attended a couple of districtwide workshops and labored during evenings and over weekends to immerse themselves in the new method. Two years later, students in the program achieved scores nearly 3 percent higher in tests emphasizing the mechanics taught, but were no better than children before them in reading paragraphs and stories with comprehension.

The above scenario has been repeated over and over with the same ending. The person in authority, with at best limited understanding of what goes into a good reading program and with no effort to consult those involved who would have to carry out the changes, decrees what seems to him to make sense. The degree to which teachers' morale is lowered—and some of the best teachers simply leave because of similar behavior on the part of persons in authority—has not been adequately documented.

In our third anecdote the principal in School Z had in his hands a tool that would enable him to accomplish three goals simultaneously: implement his role as instructional leader, provide the evidence for removing weak teachers, and improve student achievement. This formidable tool was a ten-page document to be used by him twice each year to evaluate the teaching behavior of all teachers. The lack of such a device in his previous principalship had been one of his frustrations. His leadership on the committee to develop the evaluation form had contributed significantly to his getting the choice new assignment.

But the first few weeks had been disappointing and frustrating. When he had proposed a common recess time to cut down on hallway activity throughout the day, the teachers—in the first faculty meeting of the year, mind you—politely told him that they had abandoned that kind of conformity several years before and preferred the present system. Their frequent references to his predecessor, inevitably conveying respect and affection, became increasingly annoying. The principal's main preoccupation, a few weeks before districtwide principals' evaluation of teachers, was focused on terminating schoolwide team planning and cooperative teaching. These practices complicated the task of differentiating among and evaluating individual teachers. He began to spread the word that he disapproved of them.

THE CONVENTIONAL PARADIGM OF IMPROVEMENT

Let us leave this principal to his ruminations (and the disaster subsequently resulting from them) in order to look back over these three not uncommon examples of misguided human activity, no one of which was motivated by deliberate intent to do harm. Indeed, the legislators who passed the bills on reform of schooling and teacher education, the superintendent who decreed use of a specific reading program, and the principal who plotted a way to restructure School Z sought to do good. They had in mind a means to justify certain ends—nothing irrational about that.

All failed to understand the history and complexity of the problems they sought to solve. All stumbled into solutions that had failed to be productive before. Unwittingly, perhaps, they reduced, or manipulated so as partially to reduce, the potency of those best situated both to understand the problems and to derive solutions. All were guided by the familiar paradigm of someone in higher authority exercising the power of that position in seeking to control the behavior of persons perceived to have less authority and who, ironically, would be held responsible and accountable for complying with what was being imposed upon them. Further, they failed to understand that "the world of work consists mostly of horizontal relationships."[3]

It is quite possible that all were frustrated by growing awareness that the uncoupled nature of our educational system—with its lack of precise purpose, absence of assured ends/means relationships, and openness to input at all levels—seems somehow to defeat commonly understood input/output strategies of improvement. Consequently, they turned to the power of their assumed authority, to the tried and true, to make things happen.

> There was a time, celebrated in song and story, when leadership was entrusted to "leaders." Their members were tiny, their information scarce, their expertise primitive, the range of their options narrow, the range of their power marginal, the scale of their actions limited. But they were at least in charge.[4]

AN ALTERNATIVE PARADIGM

Increasingly, in many areas of human endeavor, there is emerging an alternative to this top-down, authoritarian, linear approach to change, with its pathological emphasis on accountability. (See chapter 3 for further discussion.) This alternative perspective is not merely a worked-over version of the model illustrated in the preceding anecdotes. Rather, it represents what is often referred to as a "paradigm shift"—a reorientation of such magnitude that virtually nothing of one's previous world view remains. One-way directives are replaced by multiple interactions; leadership by authority is replaced by leadership by knowledge; following rules and regulations is replaced by providing more room for decision making; mandated behavior is replaced by inquiring behavior; accountability is replaced by high expectations, responsibility, and a level of trust that includes freedom to make mistakes; and much more. It is clear that the relevance of this paradigm shift varies from human endeavor to human endeavor.

It seems a little odd that many educators whose views jibe with this alternative have found recent justification in principles derived from studying successful companies,[5] given the conventional image of business as "hard and tough" and authoritarian, and of education as "soft and tender" and humane. Perhaps the admonition that schools should be more businesslike has been taken more seriously by educators than is generally presumed.[6]

This and other chapters in this volume reveal side-by-side existence of a hierarchically structured educational system, with increasing authority vested in a few people toward and at the top, and belief among many of the writers that educational improvement calls for increasing the authority and decision-making space of the large numbers of individuals who constitute the base of the pyramid. Empowering principals and teachers—those closest to the processes of students' learning—to create the best possible school settings is not likely to result from mandating the rules and procedures to be followed. It would appear, rather, that this empowerment and everything one might expect to follow from it are more likely to occur when those in positions of authority create policies designed to provide the time and resources deemed necessary for on-site professional and institutional renewal.

Before turning to how the levels of the educational system might function separately and together to assure this renewal (a theme introduced in this chapter and refined in others), let us look a little more closely at this structure and how it tends to function, especially when responding to the message "do better" or "promote excellence."

The Functioning of the Educational System

Our public educational system often is described as loosely coupled. Given the way it has grown up, for it to be otherwise today would come as a surprise.

At one time—not so long ago—there was little or no "system" beyond the local school. Until relatively recently, something resembling today's hierarchical structure of professional and lay groups was characteristic only of cities. There was no central administrative office or superintendent in the district where I attended school, even though the district had one secondary school and five elementary schools. Even when I began teaching in a much larger district, a small board controlled everything, with its secretary managing all business affairs (largely a matter of assuring maintenance, supplies, and some modest equipment at each site).The secretary linked directly with each principal (who picked up school supplies in the storehouse). There was no superintendent, no professional staff in a district office, no staff development, and no bargaining process.

No such simplicity exists today. Among the states, only Hawaii has no local boards; one board serves the whole state. Each of the 15,000 or so school districts in the continental United States has a lay board, a superintendent, and a central staff ranging from clerical employees in the smallest, to hundreds of professional and support persons in the largest. In addition, there is a state board; a state department of education headed by a commissioner, chief superintendent, or secretary; and from dozens to hundreds of professional and classified employees. There are complex processes for funneling both federal and state monies to local districts and equally complex processes for assuring compliance with rules governing the use of funds. Some states have enormous authority over local districts and compelling measures for executing this authority.

The federal government has influenced schooling not through national policy but through linking education and matters of clear federal prerogative: defense, civil rights, labor, humanpower needs, and the like. In recent years, the rhetoric out of Washington, D.C. has conveyed not only a pulling back from government initiatives in education of the 1960s (for example, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965), but also the image of a desired return to an earlier time when control of schools was in the hands of local communities. The federal expenditure for elementary and secondary education is only about 7 percent of the total. But the states' percentage of support for schools has steadily risen while the proportion of local support has declined. With this shift has come, in recent years, an extraordinary increase in state efforts to exercise control. Visions of a return to town-hall gatherings of interested citizens determining expectations for their schools, funds required, and taxation levels to support their schools are chimerical. The states now call the shots in ways that would startle those who forged a national constitution providing for no federal responsibility—to assure, presumably, that schools would be controlled by their communities, not in federal or state capitals.

These developments, like most in the affairs of humans, have not been guided by some rational plan. Further, they have taken place rapidly. Policies have been shaped by events, not created to shape things anticipated. It has been not uncommon for states such as California to introduce 600 or more bills pertaining to education at one session of the legislature, with as many as half of these wending their way to passage. These bills have been inspired by every possible interest among the electorate, and have addressed everything from how schools are to be financed to what teachers are to teach and how they are to organize their classrooms. There is usually no way to monitor teachers' behavior with respect to specific legislation and, more often than not, teachers go about their daily business blissfully unaware of mandates designed to direct what they do behind classroom doors.

The system is then, not surprisingly, uncoupled. This does not mean, however, that it is unresponsive. On the contrary, when legislators get sufficiently concerned about alcohol and drug abuse, courses on the subject show up in schools and teachers teach them. When scholars are interested in the functioning of small groups, teachers often are found using small-group instruction as a variation from total-group instruction. When the society as a whole gets concerned about declining achievement test scores, the decline usually slows, stops, and reverses itself.

While not closely coupled, the educational system might well be described as responsive—that is, dominant concerns and values in the surrounding society get built into the functioning of schools. The system is relatively open on all sides and at all levels. Consequently, messages come in from the sides, not just down from the top in straightforward, linear fashion. Some messages are not listened to, some are listened to but not heard, some are soon forgotten, some are given lip service, some make a difference. Sorting out the routes and fate of messages that do and do not affect schools is not easy. Since the process is only dimly understood, efforts to plan deliberately and to effect change have had a very mixed record of success. Yet, just a little study of the history of schooling in this country reveals change to have been one of its characteristics. There is little agreement, however, on the proposition that the changes have been consistently for the better.

As this volume is being written, there is much talk of school improvement, all of it implying change, from a return to the "good old days" to fundamental reconstruction designed to prepare children and youth for some impending era in which technology will play a profound role. School districts have their Project 2001 or 2010. State policymakers look anxiously at other states for signs as to whether their state is falling behind in the great schooling race. On a day in early December 1984, the *Savannah Morning News* cheerfully reported that Georgia ranked ninth in school reform. The office of the Secretary of Education had identified the twenty reforms most frequently recommended in education commission reports, and had surveyed the states to determine how many had been enacted by their legislatures. Georgia, with more than a dozen enacted, ranked just below the eight front runners. Toward the end, the news release stated, with no apparent sense of the irony, that no effort had been made to determine the quality of the "reforms."

Because this nation has attached so much importance to education and so has equated education with schooling, we grow more than a little uneasy when our schools appear not to be performing at current levels of expectation. When the problems appear to be unusually serious, we go into a spasm of reform. Almost inevitably, during these periods of galvanic response, there is a bottom line where the assumed results of our efforts are calculated in terms of scores on norm-referenced, standardized achievement tests. Usually the scores go up. Ironically, however, there may be little relationship between the turnaround and the contents of reform rhetoric. Stedman and Kaestle cite evidence to suggest that the decline of test scores in the late 1960s and early 1970s ended for some national measures in 1976 and 1977, and for the Scholastic Aptitude Test by 1980. "The National Commission on Excellence in Education, with its dire warnings of a nation at risk in 1983, was about five years too late. Instead of a 'rising tide of mediocrity,' it should have proclaimed a rising tide of test scores."[7]

Whether impassioned rhetoric and accompanying enactments are contributors to or merely the unwitting celebration of rising test scores is immaterial, however, if significant educational improvement takes place. By "educational" surely we mean the cultivation of higher-order intellectual processes and human sensibilities, not just the acquisition of those bits of information and basic skills so easily and frequently measured by tests. In the former realms, however, the evidence over the years, whatever the prevailing rhetoric of reform, suggests that students have not done well. Much of the blame is attributed to a narrow array of teaching procedures emphasizing recitation and recall[8] and a race to cover too much material in a routine, rote fashion.[9] Yet, students of current efforts to improve the schools see teachers directing even more attention to these old-fashioned methods,[10] focusing primarily on minimal skills,[11] with a heavy emphasis on *a* textbook, workbooks, and multiple-choice questions.[12]

It appears that rising test scores no more assure a sound, healthy educational system than does a thermometer reading of 98.6 degrees assure a healthy human being.[13] Just as such a reading might lull a human into thinking he or she is sound of mind and body, rising test scores can lull a nation into thinking its schools are in good shape.

Further, preoccupation with test scores as virtually the sole criterion of school quality, joined with increased authority assumed at the state level, creates the prospect of more and more prescriptions of the means of education emanating from state capitols. Ironically, the fact that, up to now, the educational system has remained quite uncoupled increases this possibility. It is frustrating for state-level policymakers to sense the slippage as policies are reinterpreted, distorted, or ignored in their progressions from passage to implementation. But if something as concrete as test scores can measure the quality of education and if certain practices hook up with these scores, why not mandate the practices? This is an appealing notion that ties in nicely with some long-standing forms of rationality. It appears to circumvent the inefficient mushiness of the uncoupled ways in which the educational system has operated up to now—when there was no science to guide it.

There are many troubles with this seemingly straightforward, rational approach. First, the necessary political process of government depends on a consensus of opinions—opinions that, even when there is high agreement, may be quite different from fact. Second, the lawmaking process is relatively linear and singular; it does not cope easily with complexity. But studies increasingly are showing that no one intervention consistently improves learning. Good teachers orchestrate multiple factors, with sensitive awareness of individual children. Third, the surest way to do harm in areas where knowledge of various kinds is needed is to legislate what at best are yesterday's truths. These and other arguments add up to the conclusions that mandating ways to improve pupil achievement is at best futile and at worst dangerous, especially as we come to know more about such phenomena. And then, when we consider the probability that achievement test scores tell us hardly anything about the quality of education under way in schools and classrooms anyway, for legislators and other policymakers to preoccupy themselves with how to increase them begins to look silly.

Nonetheless, there are very sensible things that policymakers, administrators, teachers, parents, students, and others can do to improve the quality of education in schools. All of these people can be effectively linked to assure that these sensible things are done well and that, taken together, they make a difference. The ideas, processes, and actors involved constitute the subject matter of this volume. The ideas and processes used and the ways actors at the several levels of the educational system function combine to determine the health of the total ecology. Chapter 2 delves more deeply into the structure of the educational system and its functioning.

Generating an Improvement Agenda

In our society, most persons in positions of authority had for years been in situations of less power. It is not easy to share when they probably had not enjoyed the same opportunity previously. Further, the matter of delegating and sharing is especially complicated in education because the authority and responsibility of the several levels of decision making (federal, state, district, school, and so forth) and of the various actors (legislators, school board members, administrators, supervisors, teachers, parents, nonparents, students, and so forth) are not at all clear. When someone in authority does not know the scope of that authority, a great deal of energy is consumed in defining and expanding one's turf. Since so many people appear to share the territory out of which this piece of turf is carved, one hesitates before inviting others to occupy the terrain. Such power as there is—perceived, usually, to be finite—must then be cut up into more pieces, each smaller than before. Further, with more people sharing, the power presumed to reside in a position of authority appears to dwindle. From this perspective, we see the aptness of the observation that "the reason academic politics are so vicious is that the stakes are so low."

One of the many troublesome problems associated with the ill-defined locus and turf of authority and responsibility pertains to getting agreement on an agenda of improvement throughout the educational system. The situation is somewhat akin to the unlikely one in a large company that makes furniture where employees do not know whether they are to make chairs or sawdust out of lumber delivered to them. Limiting or clarifying the agenda automatically removes a powerful device for securing and enhancing power. With authority and responsibility concentrated at the state level in 1983, a fascinating race for the initiative in setting the reform agenda took place among governors, legislators, state school boards, chief state school officers, and both professional and lay groups seeking to influence and gain status from the winners. In this process, contenders usually claim that their agenda is what the people want. Research in general is decried, but effective use often is made of selected findings that can be construed to support the agenda already conceived. Hence, the misleading cliché: "One always can find research to support any position."

The foregoing observations partially explain why the process of school improvement is so erratic and noncumulative, with each successive era often washing out the gains of its predecessor. Nonetheless, this volume was developed in large part out of the assumption that *an agenda of cumulative improvement can be generated, sustained, and updated.* This statement is not made in anticipation of miracles but merely with the expectation that the process can be made more orderly and productive.

The realization of this assumption depends on the acceptance of several correlate assumptions. *First, the expectations set for schools by state authorities must be broad and comprehensive.* Setting them in the form of proficiencies for students and competencies for teachers is to meddle in programmatic means, a matter for which state-level authorities have little or no competence and for which they would hastily eschew any suggestion that they be held accountable. It is reasonable to expect health workers to contribute significantly to preventing and remediating illness. But to prescribe the methods of their diagnosis and the means of their remediation is to be disruptive and dysfunctional.

A second correlate assumption is that these expectations must be derived from analysis of long-term evolution in the need for education. At the turn of the century, an elementary school education of seven or eight years duration was deemed adequate (and essential) for effective citizenship, entry into the work force, and continuing personal growth. Assuring this education for children was an appropriate state responsibility. Today, the need for a secondary school education is implicit in our culture. Useful though the annual Gallup Poll and other surveys of schooling may be for assessing current fashions (especially those inadvertently stimulated by polls), they are of little use and can be dangerous when employed as evidence for substantially changing expectations for schools.

Third, there must be no mushiness in the state's commitment to equity. There is great strength in the fact that the educational system is open on all sides at all levels. The fact that people vary in taking advantage of what this implies is to be expected. What is to be avoided, to the degree possible, are the ways by which utilization of this openness functions to the detriment of those being educated inside schools. What is to be avoided, also, are the ways those inside schools utilize practices (often with the excuse that those on the outside want them) that are prejudicial in their effect on children and youth. Consequently, one of the most important functions to be carried out by state authorities is a continuing assessment of the degree to which educational expectations are being met equitably for all age groups to be served by schooling.

Fourth, the actors at each level of the system must constantly seek to determine whether the decisions under consideration are theirs to make and must be consistently sensitive in making decisions that others are to carry out. "Who should make which decisions?" is the question usually ignored when persons assuming authority are prescribing behavior for others.

Superintendent A was out of line in mandating a method of teaching reading. The popular precept, "The principal is the instructional leader," must be defined and interpreted carefully. If it means that the principal will determine the methods of teaching to be used by teachers, the precept is dangerous indeed. The negative aspect of making decisions that others should be free to make is not just the Peter Principle at work, that is, in moving the decision to a higher level of incompetence. Rather, it is in slowly lobotomizing those who should be making the decisions until they become both undesirous and incapable of making them. Getting better teachers into schools, for example, will not do much to improve the quality of instruction if the best people there are on their way out the back door or slowly adjusting to the stupefying limits of their legislated space and role.

Fifth, the desired connections between levels of the system (for example state and district, district and school) are a set of agreements, not a set of directives from one level to another. Let us look at how the situation regarding Superintendent A might have proceeded quite differently. Suppose that his district had in place a process through which every school developed and then maintained, with annual updates, a long-term plan of improvement, created by a body of responsible parties under the principal's leadership, as recommended by Joyce and his colleagues.[14] Assume also that there was in place a contextual assessment system that included data on trends in students' academic performance. And assume, finally, that careful analyses of these data had raised questions in the mind of Superintendent A about children's competence in deriving meaning from their reading. This would then be a matter to check out with each principal in the regular planning process and, perhaps, a matter for priority attention in schools where reading comprehension appeared to be in need of improvement. It is not unreasonable to assume that playing out this scenario could have been much more beneficial and much less painful than was the process set in motion by Superintendent A.

Sixth, the word and the concept "accountability" must be changed to "responsibility," interpreted to mean responsibility for carrying out the defined functions of a given level or unit of decision making by the actors encompassed within it. The implication of this assumption is that each individual or group concerns itself with the adequacy of its own behavior, not the behavior of those at another level or in another unit. Legislators, for example, should concern themselves with whether they are providing what schools and those in them need to function effectively, instead of mandating school-to-school comparison of test scores.

Seventh, such level-to-level monitoring as is deemed minimally necessary should focus on whether adequate mechanisms for assuring responsible performance are in place. For example, in its forward-looking recommendations, the California Commission on the Teaching Profession in 1985 wisely eschewed state measures designed to ferret out incompetent teachers and, instead, recommended a mechanism designed to place substantial responsibility on the teaching profession for monitoring its own members.[15] In the same vein, it would be exceedingly useful if there were a Center for the Study of Educational Policy providing, among other things, ongoing feedback to legislators on the anticipated and unanticipated consequences of legislation designed to improve schools.

Eighth, the most promising unit of selection in seeking to mount and maintain programs providing quality and equitable education is the individual school. Implementation of this assumption calls for profound changes in virtually every aspect of the system's functioning. The interest of the state in reporting and acting upon the quality of education shifts from individual students to districts, which, in turn, must maintain data on the characteristics and conditions of each school. School faculties determine their specific needs for personnel when colleagues retire or leave. Teacher education programs include attention to the understandings, skills, and attitudes of future teachers who are to assume collegial responsibility for the quality of a school's functioning.

A *ninth assumption* in this incomplete list expands on the eighth by providing a unifying theme for the agenda of improvement: *The most dependable assurance that children and youth are maximally involved in learning is a renewing school—one in which all those associated with it and, above all, its principal and teachers, are continually engaged in a process of critically examining and improving the health of their school's culture.* Heckman succinctly paraphrases the views of teachers in the most renewing schools of a group studied: "We take care of our business."[16] State and district policies must stand the test of whether they promote or impede this renewing process. It is clear, for example, that employing teachers for 180 days to be consumed entirely by teaching duties, with no additional days for planning, frustrates what I am proposing from the very start. A shift away from districtwide staff development days to school-based days would be a promising beginning.

At least part of the paradigm shift involved in accepting the foregoing as working assumptions requires mental movement away from the anachronistic view of schooling as Mark Hopkins at one end of a log and a student at the other. This naive image, idealistic though it is, has prevented efforts to improve schooling from getting much beyond what is conveyed by the slogan, "It all depends on the teacher," or, more recently, "It all depends on the principal." The importance of teachers and principals—and of getting effective ones—is obvious. But it is equally obvious that only the most unusually creative and energetic educators are able to perform at high levels in malfunctioning settings, let alone make these settings hospitable to teaching and learning. At the heart of every state's agenda for educational improvement must be the cultivation of healthy school cultures.

The Improvement Agenda

It would be a grievous error to assume from the previous section that a healthy educational ecology is content-free, preoccupied only with the human connections within and among the decision-making levels of the system. To employ the analogy used earlier, everyone involved in the furniture company must be fully aware that the organization is engaged in making and marketing furniture, not sawdust. Similarly, everyone in the educational system must share agreements on what the system is for and be reasonably clear on what constitutes adequate, sound, or inadequate functioning. There never will be full agreement on such matters. What we must seek is a working consensus, sufficient for moving forward while the dialogue continues.

The process of seeking such a consensus and, therefore, of agreeing on an agenda, can be vastly enlightened by knowledge that reveals deep-seated trends and agreements or that causes many people to say: "Something must be done about this obviously unsatisfactory state of affairs." One of these megatrends, to use the Naisbitt term,[17] is the view that more and more formal education is required to prepare people for effective, satisfying functioning in an increasingly complex world. Implicit in this view is the assumption, stated earlier, that high school graduation is the minimum quantitative criterion. *Translated into an agenda, this means progression through both elementary and secondary education for all.* Minnesota's top-ranking (with 86 percent of its students graduating from high school) and Mississippi's bottom ranking (with 61.8 percent graduating from high school) suggest the challenge to each state in seeking to make up for the shortfall.[18]

But this important agenda item requires further elaboration. Surely this does not mean progression through any secondary school program, such as one heavily weighted toward preparing students for cosmetology, at the expense of more general studies. The debate over this issue is not at all settled, however, with scholars such as Clark arguing that endeavoring to be common for all students is precisely where the secondary school went wrong[19] and the National Academy of Arts and Sciences (with two other academies) arguing the case for increased commonality in the curriculum, whether or not high school students are planning to progress into higher education or go directly into the world of work.[20]

Nonetheless, both Boyer[21] and Goodlad[22] concluded from their analyses and research that there is a substantial adult constituency in support of each of the traditional goals of schooling, if forced to choose, and also substantial support for the notion that all four be promoted simultaneously in the schools. Both concluded that, in regard to expectations for schools: "We want it all." *The second entry on the agenda, then, calls for systemwide commitment to four comprehensive educational goals for schools: academic, social and civic, vocational, and personal.*

Even though the first correlate assumption of the previous section advocated the promulgation of broad goal statements, the research cited above revealed substantial agreement in state documents on more precise delineations.[23] Although their wording differed, the states articulated expectations that could be interpreted only to imply students' involvement in all the major domains of knowledge and ways of knowing. Nothing in the wording suggested that comprehensively providing for all of these learnings was a matter of choice for school districts and schools. *Consequently, a third agenda item emerges: The need to design curricula with a large common core of studies comprising mankind's progression to the present (for example, art, music, religion, literature, work, invention, war and peace); the natural world (for example, science and mathematics); the global village (for example, cultural and cross-cultural studies); communication (for example, art, music, drama, literature); the nature of humans (for example, biology, psychology, health, nutrition); self-fulfillment (for example, refinement of artistic, physical, mathematical, scientific, or technological talent); and the modes through which understanding and inquiry proceed (reading, writing, speaking, hypothesizing, evaluating, calculating, and the rest).*[24]

Early in this chapter we cited studies revealing the narrow range of pedagogical procedures, limited variety of materials, passivity, and the like characterizing many classrooms. Yet, elaborating on aims of education and goals of schooling, down through the years, conveys an expectation of students variously engaged in processes of learning, independently and collaboratively. But future teachers receive their clinical preparation under conditions that expose them to the sterile practices revealed in the research, not to those conveyed in the aims of education. Consequently, teachers tend to teach as they were taught as students, modeling their mentors and not exploring new terrain. *Redesigning enough schools to serve as exemplary sites for the education of teachers and revitalizing both preservice and in-service teacher education become agenda items of the highest priority.*

Most states include in their rhetoric of expectations for schools statements to the effect that the levels and kinds of schooling to be provided are for *all* students. Most elaborate on the concepts of quality and equity so as to make unacceptable in schools and classrooms any arrangements that discriminate in ways that deny access to knowledge. Yet, in such common practices as grouping and tracking, research reveals differences in expectations for students, content, pedagogy, teachers' enthusiasm and caring, classroom climate, and the like that clearly discriminate on the basis of such factors as socioeconomic status and race.[25] The agenda item of school desegregation, tackled seriously in the 1970s and since, remains unfinished. *The agenda item now to be added is that of assuring for all students equal access to knowledge.*

The five foregoing items constitute an incomplete agenda of imperatives we dare not ignore. They allow little room for political ploys designed to keep the agenda open in order to prolong the power plays for turf. There is no place for the familiar process of one part of the system delegating its responsibility and holding another level and other actors accountable. This is an agenda that requires for its fulfillment a healthy ecology involving the whole of the educational system.

The Educational Ecosystem

This chapter began with three anecdotes, each describing presumably well-intentioned actions that disrupted the ecology of schools—in the third anecdote, just one school. But the total educational system is made up of many individual schools, the functioning of which can readily be rendered unhealthy by unfortunate interventions from outside or ill-advised decisions within. The thrust of this chapter, particularly in the section entitled "Generating an Improvement Agenda," has been toward clarifying how each major component of the system might function not only to be healthy in itself, but also healthful in its contribution to the functioning of the other components.

The ultimate criterion for judging the health of the ecosystem beyond each school, however, is how well it functions to support individual schools. The health of the school, in turn, is judged both by how effectively it relates to the larger ecosystem, especially with respect to interpreting its mission, and by how effectively it functions internally to carry out this mission. We begin to see from these propositions regarding judgment that not all agendas for improvement suffice. We begin to see, also, that the ways of fulfilling the improvement agenda are not equally good. A healthy school ecology is one that is critically attuned to both its social context and the knowledge most relevant to the development and maintenance of sound educational practices.

The foregoing paragraph leads to the observation that the improvement of schooling involves much more than the use of what research tells us about the change process, important though the concepts revealed by such research undoubtedly are. Consequently, this chapter has proposed not only appropriate roles and activities for the actors outside schools, but also sketches of a script designed to guide the actors within. Subsequent chapters expand, then, on the functioning of both the ecosystem beyond schools and the ecology of the school unit—all with a view to helping the array of actors identified earlier perform their responsibilities thoughtfully and constructively.

What Follows

Succeeding chapters have been written by persons who have thought carefully about and have had reflective experience with the particular aspect of the educational system and school improvement they were asked to address. Several write from a university perspective; several from that of daily involvement in the precollegiate enterprise. All of the authors have been or are now much more than spectators merely watching the dramas and actors of their chapters.

Chapter 2 (Donna H. Kerr), chapter 3 (Kenneth A. Sirotnik), and chapter 5 (Ann Lieberman and Susan J. Rosenholtz), together with chapter 1, deal with overall structures and processes. Kerr's emphasis is on the making of policy that is guided in every respect by a clear understanding and a keen appreciation of what it means for schools to educate, that is, to introduce their students into the culture. The centerpiece for Lieberman and Rosenholtz is what gets in the way—the blocks and barriers that almost always hamper progress—and how to overcome those blocks. Sirotnik uses the school as his primary locus for discussing the role of inquiry and evaluation. Paul Heckman (chapter 4) expands on the concept of school culture and its importance, no matter where the process of change is initiated.

Chapter 6 (Calvin Frazier), chapter 7 (Richard C. Williams, Bruce Newlin, and Kenneth L. Moffett), and chapter 8 (John Henshaw, Carol Wilson, and John Morefield) focus successively on the respective roles of the legislature, board, and superintendent at the state level; the relationship of districts to the state and to the schools within the districts; and on the school as the unit of change. All of these groups, individuals, and component parts of the educational system are influenced by a wide array of interest groups identified and discussed by Richard L. Andrews in chapter 9.

Chapter 1 introduced at several points the role of knowledge and research. This is much more complicated than is conveyed by the image of a body of studies to be drawn upon in order to point directions or support policies and practices. In chapter 10 Margret Buchmann discusses the dilemmas of the researcher in seeking to "keep the voice of science alive in the conversation about education." Then, in chapter 11, Beatrice Ward and Joseph Pascarelli discuss the potential of networks and partnerships in the renewal process. Finally, in chapter 12, I endeavor to draw from the preceding chapters an array of interrelated ideas for improving the health of the educational system our society has created.

Footnotes

1. National Commission on Excellence in Education, *A Nation At Risk* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1983).

2. One small district, still only a few months into the process of writing competencies, estimated the cost to date (largely in time of personnel) at $53,000.

3. Harlan Cleveland, *The Knowledge Executive* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1985), p. 9.

4. Ibid., p. 1.

5. See, for example, Thomas J. Peters and Robert H. Waterman, *In Search of Excellence* (New York: Harper and Row, 1982).

6. The well-known classic treatment of concepts of efficiency transferred from the business to the educational world is Raymond E. Callahan, *Education and the Cult of Efficiency* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).

7. Lawrence C. Stedman and Carl F. Kaestle, "The Test Score Decline Is Over: Now What?," *Phi Delta Kappan* 67 (November 1985): 204.

8. Kenneth A. Sirotnik, "What You See Is What You Get—Consistency, Persistency, and Mediocrity in Classrooms," *Harvard Educational Review* 53 (February 1983): 16-31.

9. Theodore R. Sizer, *Horace's Compromise: The Dilemma of the American High School* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1984).

10. Larry Cuban, "Effective Schools: A Friendly But Cautionary Note," *Phi Delta Kappan* 66 (June 1983): 695-96.

11. Daniel P. Resnick and Lauren B. Resnick, "Standards, Curriculum, and Performance," *Educational Researcher* 14 (April 1985): 5-20.

12. Deborah Meier, "Why Reading Tests Don't Test Reading," *Dissent* 28 (Fall 1981): 457-66.

13. For further development of this theme, see Kenneth A. Sirotnik and John I. Goodlad, "The Quest for Reason Amidst the Rhetoric of Reform: Improving Instead of Testing Our Schools," in *Education on Trial: Strategies for the Future*, ed. William J. Johnson (San Francisco: Institute for Contemporary Studies, 1985), p. 278.

14. Bruce R. Joyce, Richard H. Hersh, and Michael McKibbin, *The Structure of School Improvement* (New York: Longman, 1983), chap. 8.

15. California Commission on the Teaching Profession, *Who Will Teach Our Children?* (Sacramento: California Commission on the Teaching Profession, 1985).

16. Paul E. Heckman, *Exploring the Concept of School Renewal: Cultural Differences Between More and Less Renewing Schools*, Technical Report No. 33, A Study of Schooling (Los Angeles: Laboratory in School and Community Education, Graduate School of Education, University of California, 1983).

17. John Naisbitt, *Megatrends: Ten New Directions Transforming Our Lives* (New York: Warner Books, 1982).

18. Harold F. Hodgkinson, *All One System: Demographics of Education, Kindergarten through Graduate School* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Educational Leadership, 1985), p. 11.

19. Burton L. Clark, "The High School and the University: What Went Wrong in America, Part I," *Phi Delta Kappan* 66 (February 1985): 391-97; "Part 2," *Phi Delta Kappan* 66 (March 1985): 472-75.

20. National Academy of Arts and Sciences, National Academy of Engineering, and Institute of Medicine, *High Schools and the Changing Workplace* (Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 1984).

21. Ernest L. Boyer, *High School* (New York: Harper and Row, 1983).

22. John I. Goodlad, *A Place Called School* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1984).

23. Ibid.

24. John I. Goodlad, "Core Curriculum: What and for Whom?" (Paper prepared for the International Seminar on Core Curriculum in Western Societies, Enschede, The Netherlands, November 1985).

25. Jeannie Oakes, *Keeping Track: How Schools Structure Inequality* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1985).

CHAPTER II

Authority and Responsibility in Public Schooling

DONNA H. KERR

Introduction

In the popular press, some have declared recent attempts to reform public schooling a failure: "The reforms, aimed at an already heavily bureaucratic and inflexible system, propose to heal the patient by administering more of what made him sick."[1] In significant measure, this conclusion is, I fear, warranted. If the proposed reforms come to little, it will be especially disheartening to the many lay citizens, teachers, school administrators, students, and legislators who, in thoughtful discussions arising from deep concerns, correctly identified so many symptoms of public schooling's ailments: rigidity, boredom, burnout, low expectations and flagging standards, low achievement generally and lack of adequate preparation for college more particularly, underprepared teachers, poor working conditions, lack of "time on task," increasing dropout rates, confusion about the appropriate purposes of schooling, and so on.

The successful reform of public schooling, a complex and hierarchically organized institution, will require a clearer understanding of authority and responsibility within that institutional structure than many reform efforts imply. Moreover, the questions of who should exercise what authority and who should shoulder what responsibilities cannot be answered without a discussion of the central, sine qua non task of schooling: education.

The motivating question of this chapter is, *At what levels in schooling's hierarchy should what decisions be made and what actions taken?* After a brief sketch of schooling's decision structure, we will address four prior questions, answers to which are necessary to deciding who should be doing what regarding the schools: (1) What should be the primary or guiding task of schooling? (2) Who should bear the responsibility for maintaining the *conditions* of formal education? (3) To whom should the authority for educating be delegated? and (4) In educating, what should be the responsibilities of the teachers? Responses to these questions suggest a framework of authority and responsibility within which proposals for school improvement can be more appropriately and more effectively placed.

Schooling's Decision Structure: A Sketch

For extensive discussions of the powers, practices, and policies commonly found at the various levels in the schooling hierarchy, one should turn to other sources.[2] For purposes of this essay, it suffices to sketch only the main levels of decision making and to indicate in a general way the authority vested therein and the responsibilities assumed.

Even though most of the schooling structure is located at the state level and below, the federal government has developed policy principally regarding sex discrimination (Title IX and various court cases), desegregation (court cases), education of the handicapped (PL 94-142), education for the disadvantaged (categorical aid), and vocational education (categorical aid and teacher training programs). While some argue that lack of mention of education in the United States Constitution restricts the latitude and means by which the federal government can make decisions that impact schooling, such is clearly not the case on the state level. No state has exploited the full range of possible latitude in decision making regarding schooling, but some have come closer than others. All states have policies for certifying personnel; all or many have standards regarding attendance, fiscal record keeping, and textbooks or other instructional materials. While all states have the power to tax and allocate monies in support of schooling, funding policies range from complete and exclusive support to minimal state support and the expectation that the districts will fund schooling. State court decisions have generally concerned compulsory attendance, teacher fitness, the use of public funds, affirmative action, reform of state school financing, metropolitan desegregation, student rights, and rights of the handicapped.

Much as the states serve as managers of federal programs, so the school districts are "nested" in the state governance structure and are commonly charged with implementing state policy.[3] Principally agents to oversee the management and operation of the schools, the school districts generally have the power to raise taxes and the right to make contracts. The board's executive officer, the superintendent, generally has some latitude in the administration of district policies regarding appointments, teaching assignments, promotions, salary levels, and the curriculum. The teacher's latitude for decision making consists of that which has not already been decided. At the bottom of the authority structure of public schooling, teachers have exerted some influence over decision making on the district level through collective bargaining. While union influence has in some instances rendered salaries and working conditions more favorable to the maintenance of the profession, such actions have tended not to address issues of the teachers' educational authority and responsibility.

The striking aspect of the schooling hierarchy is not so much what historically has been mandated at the higher levels as it is the potential for restrictive policies, as some of the school reforms suggest. The states can specify the subjects to be taught on each grade level, the textbooks to be used, and the number of minutes to be dedicated to each subject each week. But should they? Some legislatures are at liberty to require that districts specify "student learning objectives" for their teachers. But should they? Should *principals* evaluate teaching? Should school boards and school administrators determine who is qualified to teach a subject? Should states (or school districts, for that matter) hold teachers and schools accountable for student performance on mandated tests? To answer such questions requires that we be clear about the core task of schooling and that we develop a principled understanding of where the authority and responsibility of schooling must rest if the schools are to serve their educational purposes.

The Guiding Task of Schooling

The problem with the question "What are schools for?" or "What should be the focal task of schooling?" is that the answer is too obvious to be illuminating, yet too uncritically understood to be correct. Of course, our schools are for education. But then to serve a number of other instructional and political agendas, the adjectives are tacked on: health education, consumer education, sex education, career education, vocational education, college-bound education, law education, environmental education, basic education, academic education, and so on. Education itself thus becomes both obvious and invisible, a shibboleth and a hollow term. To develop the bases for deciding who should have what authority and responsibility in schooling, we need to understand the sense in which education justifies the institution of schooling and its substance as schooling's principal task. To begin, let us first consider a moral argument for education—a general argument that establishes the need for a cultural conception of education, which is in turn the second step. The third move, a political argument in the broadest sense, motivates the need for education (no adjectives attached) in a democracy. Hence, the justification for schooling and public schooling in particular.

There are several ways to make a moral argument for education. For purposes of eventually justifying schooling aimed at education in a pluralistic society, it is prudent to begin with an argument that assumes no particular conception of morality. I borrow from the work of John Rawls and his theory of justice.[4] A well-ordered society both advances the good of its members and is "effectively regulated by a public conception of justice."[5] Put otherwise, it is a society in which "everyone accepts and knows that the others accept the same principles of justice" and "the basic social institutions are generally known to satisfy these principles."[6]

In a longer treatment, I would maintain that the choice of or assent to any principles of justice (Rawls's or others) presupposes education as an introduction into a culture. Here the need for brevity limits this discussion to the conception of justice that Rawls presents, namely that "all social values—liberty and opportunity, income and wealth and the bases of self-respect [the "primary goods"]—are to be distributed equally unless an unequal distribution of any, or all, of these is to everyone's advantage."[7] Let us here focus on but one of these "primary goods," self-respect, which "includes a person's sense of his own value, his secure conviction that his conception of his good, his plan of life, is worth carrying out."[8] As I have noted elsewhere, inasmuch as valuing one's self and one's plans and abilities is a cultural achievement, self-respect presupposes education as initiation into some culture.[9] Valuing as a warranted, critical cherishing of plans and abilities requires apprehension of a cultural context and mastery of its canons of assessment.

What, more particularly, is to be understood by education as initiation into a culture, that is, by such a cultural conception of education? Assuming normal fetal and infant development, we are all born with and develop brains. Mind is not a brute fact, a product of biological life; it is a cultural artifact. As Richard Peters puts it, "To have a mind is not to enjoy a private picture-show or to exercise some inner diaphanous organ; it is to have an awareness differentiated with the canons implicit in [the distinctive forms of knowledge], these inherited traditions."[10] Similarly, Michael Oakeshott writes of education as initiation into a conversation "begun in the primeval forests and extended and made more articulate in the course of centuries. . . . Education . . . is an initiation into the skill and partnership of this conversation, . . . [a] conversation which, in the end, gives place and character to every human activity and utterance."[11]

As an introduction to the forms of knowledge, education empowers one to understand experience in the ways that humankind has invented. Paul Hirst adds clarity with his definition of a form of knowledge: "a distinct way in which our experience becomes structured round the use of accepted public symbols," whose distinguishing features are central concepts, a distinctive logical structure, distinctive expressions testable against experience with particular criteria, and a set of techniques and skills for testing such expressions.[12] As examples of such forms of knowledge, Hirst includes mathematics, the physical sciences, the human sciences, history, religion, literature, the fine arts, and philosophy.[13] Learning one's way into the cultural heritage that these ways of structuring experience represent is, to be sure, not all that is worth learning. Physical training, various sorts of specialist training, and even perhaps some nature of character training might appropriately be undertaken as a part of schooling, but they are derivative, for any understanding of their worth derives from education in its more fundamental mind-forming, cultural, liberating conception.

Here I hasten to interject that education under this cultural conception is not just another way of talking about "college-bound education." It is morally fundamental; it is necessary for all in a just society; it is basic to every person's learning humankind's repertoire for structuring experience. And there is a third argument: it is necessary for enfranchisement in a democratic society, likewise for the functioning of a democracy. As Pat White reasons, an appropriate education for a democracy is one policy that is in the public interest. ". . . Insofar as [citizens are] acquainted with *all* the *kinds* of considerations which could bear on, and indeed define, political problems,"[14] this knowledge is crucial, "for if the government is to be accountable, the citizen must be able to judge that it has taken all the relevant factors into account (that is, called in all the relevant experts) in making its decision."[15] White adds that while this cultural conception of education is necessary to a democracy it needs to be supplemented with the acquisition of the values of "tolerance, fraternity, justice, and consideration of interests" and "knowledge of particular political and social institutions embodying [these values] and how to operate them."[16] This is *not* to say that liberal education, the particular democratic values, and knowledge of how to operate a democracy's institutions would have to come in three packages. The selection of content for introduction to the forms of knowledge—not an exhaustive specialist's enterprise—must of course seek to exemplify the particular ways of interpreting experience, but it could have additional purposes. For example, some appropriately exemplary material in the human sciences and history might, as illustration, reasonably focus on the operation of democratic institutions.

In sum, this cultural conception of education is fundamental to at least one conception of justice, to cultural continuity, to democracy, and to our ability to interpret what we see—to structure experience. It is this broad and basic conception of education that justifies the institution of schooling generally and universal public schooling in particular. While various kinds of training (for example, physical training) and specific content emphases (for example, environmental education) might be defensible for particular purposes, by themselves they cannot and should not be expected to substitute for the central task of schooling: education as an initiation into the ways of understanding and inquiring. Education so conceived cannot be improved by courses in critical thinking, for it is itself an initiation into the disciplines of critical thinking. It cannot be passed over in favor of "basic education," for there is no education that is more basic.

Responsibility for the Conditions for Educating

Educating is a public, collective action in two senses. Its content, the forms of knowledge, are a cultural heritage and creation. Second and importantly here, the conduct of education requires the dedication of societal resources. The ways of structuring experiences and inquiry cannot be received in the way one might inherit a family heirloom. One generation can bequeath the forms of understanding to the next only by investing yet other resources in the act of bequeathing itself. Education cannot be executed as a will, a speech act; it requires a complex set of conditions and then appropriate, effective action. Before proceeding to the question of who should have the authority to educate, it is important to ask, ***Who should bear the responsibility for maintaining the conditions of formal education?*** To understand the importance of this question, it may be helpful to consider another case of a public, collective activity, that of maintaining a safe, adequate water supply for all inhabitants of a certain geographical area. Needed are (a) considerable *resources* in the form of materials for adequate systems of conduits and personnel for their maintenance, (b) *a distribution of those resources* that ensures universal availability, (c) *appropriate expertise* sufficient to support a "safe and adequate" water supply as understood by the current knowledge base, (d) *support for the exercise of that expertise* (that is, the experts must be granted conditions under which their activities of inspection, testing, and design can be conducted), and (e) *cooperation from related institutions* and endeavors. Without such cooperation, attempts to maintain a safe water supply could, for example, be hopelessly undermined by those charged with waste disposal. To question who should bear the responsibility for maintaining a safe, adequate water supply is to ask of a society, Who has the wherewithal—the political or epistemic authority—to underwrite the various necessary conditions?

Only those with central political authority can dedicate the needed societal resources to the task and regulate the distribution of those resources. Only those with knowledge of water and its safety requirements are able to provide the needed expertise. Only those with the authority to dedicate resources to the generation and maintenance of expertise—resources such as academies of science and scientific laboratories—in concert with the experts, who themselves are the only ones who can maintain their knowledge standards and ensure quality in their own ranks, can assume the responsibilities involved in providing the needed expertise. And finally, related institutions and agencies, such as the Waste Disposal Authority, must bear the responsibility for protecting against disposal activities that undermine and imperil the programs of the Water Supply Authority. If in disregard of the Water Supply Authority's admonitions about unacceptable pollutants, the Waste Disposal Authority countenances the dumping of slaughter house refuse upstream of a town, the responsibility for unsafe water must be born by the Waste Disposal Authority and not the Water Supply Authority.

We are now ready to return to the question of who should bear the responsibility for maintaining the conditions for educating. Only those with power to levy taxes can dedicate the needed societal resources to education. If, relative to education's compelling moral and political priority, these resources prove inadequate to the task of schooling as an initiation into the various ways of understanding, then those same office holders have failed to discharge their educational responsibility. (Some might wish to argue that the federal government, in addition to the states, must accept at least a shared responsibility for the basic educational resources, inasmuch as universal education is in the interest of a democratic political system at its highest reaches.) Likewise, only those on a level with the political power to levy taxes and allocate revenues are in a position to ensure a distribution of resources such that avails everyone of appropriate opportunities for becoming educated. In the matter of the general distribution of resources, the courts as well as the legislative and executive branches bear notable responsibilities.

Part of providing adequate resources to schooling consists in dedicating resources adequate to the generation and maintenance of expertise that is sufficient to support the level of sophistication that the knowledge base supports. This responsibility implies the accumulation and dedication of the necessary "human capital"—the encouragement and purchase of expertise on a level that reflects education's moral and political priority. (Here arguments need to note that without education, military defense has no point; without education, economic development founders in a sea of senseless activity.) But neither judge nor legislator nor governor is in an epistemic position to maintain and promote the standards of expertise. The experts themselves must carry the responsibility for maintaining the knowledge standards and ensuring quality in their own ranks. That is, the responsibility must rest with the professional organizations and with those in universities and colleges who claim the knowledge wherewithal to prepare persons to be educators. When states or school districts assume the authority for overseeing professional accreditation and teaching assignments, it is incumbent upon those parties to require that only those judged by the community of experts as being capable of initiating students into the respective forms of knowledge be certified and assigned to the particular task. (One who does not apprehend biology as exemplary of a form of knowledge and inquiry or one who does not know specifically how to interpret biology for the uninitiated, can only miseducate as a biology teacher.)

Much as the maintenance of the pertinent educational expertise is in its different aspects the responsibility of different parties in the hierarchy of schooling, so the promotion and safeguarding of the working conditions for teachers must be a shared responsibility. States and sometimes districts are in a political position to provide resources that determine the numbers of students and the numbers of classes that are charged to teachers. Within those resource parameters, school administrators may have the discretion to allocate district resources. More importantly, school administrators are positioned to affect the educational climate of the school and must bear responsibility for such educationally destructive practices as interrupting class sessions with intercom announcements. The teachers themselves control the expenditure of class time and other classroom resources; hence, they are responsible for some aspects of the conditions under which they must try to educate students.

From outside the schooling hierarchy must come essential cooperation by related institutions and agencies. Families, preschools and other day-care agencies, communities, and commercial enterprises, for example, must bear responsibility for "dumping pollutants upstream." When families fail to convey to children a sense of the intrinsic value of education, when communities fail to respect children's educational need to have safe places to explore, when advertising encourages children to seek only immediate gratification, the educational efforts of teachers are undermined, the conditions for educating are eroded. Likewise, when colleges and universities reduce their educational expectations of entering students—whether to maintain enrollments or simply by neglect—and when employers reduce the mindful content of jobs typically held by young people (for example, fast food chains using labels indicating "hamburgers," "french fries," and the like on cash registers), the educational conditions for schooling are weakened.

As educational institutions, schools can and do fail. The point of asking who should be responsible for maintaining the conditions for educating is not so much to place blame as to recognize the sources of failure, in order to know where we collectively have erred. If it is difficult to hold legislators accountable for funding schooling to adequate levels, it is even more difficult to hold communities accountable for their failings. But at least by understanding who should be responsible for what aspect of the conditions for educating, we will know why schooling succeeds at educating when it does and where to focus the spotlight when it does not.

The Authority for Educating

In any complex democratic society, many actors must be deemed responsible for the various conditions educating requires. This point should not be confounded with a second, quite different issue: Within the hierarchy of schooling, to whom should the authority for educating be delegated? There are other ways to cast the matter. Who should be given the institutional control of educating? Or, Who should have the *authority* to implement the state's policy to educate the young? As I shall argue, the correct, but apparently not obvious, answer is the teachers. To make my case, I shall present three distinct, yet related lines of reasoning: the organizational argument, the argument from the nature of educating, and the argument from the nature of expertise.

THE ORGANIZATIONAL ARGUMENT

Richard Elmore distinguishes between two basic possibilities for implementing policy: the regulatory approach and the programmatic approach.[17] The first advises *hierarchical* control, with which the authority remains at the top of the organization. Hence, implementation is attempted through supervision, regulation, and coercion. The second counsels *delegated* control, through which authority is delegated to the level at which the service is delivered. Hence, the responsibility, initiative, and discretion rests with the individuals who are most immediately involved in the delivery of service.[18] The choice of approach to policy implementation is, in effect, a decision regarding where the organization's energies will be spent. Hierarchical control expends its efforts in "writing regulations, specifying procedures, monitoring performance, and enforcing compliance," whereas delegated control relies on individual judgment and expends efforts on substance rather than surveillance.[19] As Elmore points out, some policies lend themselves to hierarchical control. Consider, for example, the state's policy that every motor vehicle shall be licensed. In the interest of ensuring that result, it is apparent that a tightly regulated system of procedures will most efficiently and effectively achieve the policy's purpose. Other policies, those requiring individuals' judgments in the delivery of services that must be tailored to particular, nonrecurrent circumstances, are more appropriately and effectively handled by delegated authority.[20]

With regard to education, Elmore concludes that "if school district administrators are smart, they will [seek to maximize] the individual teacher's control of the instructional process."[21] Or, more generally cast, those at the upper reaches of the organization of schooling should recognize that if any educational policy is to be implemented effectively the authority for educating must be delegated to the teachers.

There are two general criticisms of delegated as opposed to hierarchical authority: inefficiency and the protection of incompetence. The charge of inefficiency is based on the claim that delegated authority creates redundancy or overlap. "Too many people making autonomous choices, with no rational division of labor, results in overlap, duplication, and general confusion of functions."[22] Elmore aptly rejoins that charges of inefficiency based on redundancy fail in the case of education. In highly complex tasks, such as educating, redundancy is in fact crucial to the efficient accomplishment of the task. Indeed, in such complex tasks, the lack of redundancy can generate disasters. One small failure in a highly specified pedagogic algorithm can destroy the anticipated chain of relationships.[23] Anyone who has used pedagogic packages prescribed from above can attest to their tendency to fail precisely because they assume the adequacy of singular, "removed" judgment. Elmore deflects the charge that delegated authority in effect protects incompetence by reasoning that "instead of investing organizational resources in making errors more visible—that is, in constructing accountability systems," we should "invest them in increasing the exchange of information about more and less effective practices."[24] That is, given that educating requires the expenditure of scarce resources, it is more effective for those higher up in the hierarchy of schooling to be more concerned with developing general policies for providing information and experiences to improve educational practices than to focus attention on weeding out and punishing incompetents. Thus, the criticisms notwithstanding, the authority for educating should be delegated to the teachers.

ARGUMENT FROM THE NATURE OF TEACHING

Lest some object that the organizational argument makes a strong case against the indiscriminate use of hierarchical authority but that it does not make a strong case that educating is inappropriately subsumed under hierarchical control, let us invoke an argument that appeals centrally to the nature of educating. Gary Fenstermacher and Marianne Amarel distinguish between "distal agents," those higher up in the educational hierarchy, and "proximal agents," teachers and others who have direct contact with students.[25] They make three related points that show, in effect, that the authority to educate should be delegated to teachers and other proximal agents, such as counselors.

First, educating *must*, by its very nature, be done in a way that is sensitive to the peculiarities of individual learners—peculiarities that can be detected only on an individual basis and in the immediate pedagogic context. Distantly prescribed curricular materials and methods are callous to this essential fine-grained information to which educating must respond. Hence, distally imposed instructional packages, such as have appeared in reading instruction in recent years, can and do detract from the educational task of schooling.

Second, rules and regulations, the common form of distal directives, cannot themselves educate. A state might order desegregation, but it cannot itself effect integration. Moral indignation regarding racial discrimination cannot spring from state directives, but is uniquely the task of education that "liberates the mind from dogma, bias, and conformity."[26] Similarly, a state policy forbidding gender referencing withholds from teachers the authority needed to treat gender stereotyping in ways that are sensitive to educational opportunities.

Third, the defining aspect of liberal education—initiation into our culture's critical ways of understanding—assumes intentionality qua learning "to act on the basis of one's own thoughts and values."[27] In measure that teachers are reduced to serving as mouthpieces for distal authorities, they are denied deliberation and reflection prior to and as part of acting. In measure that teachers thus become automatons, they fail to model for their students the culture's store of the ways and standards of critical thinking. Therefore, it is unavoidable that schooling conducted by distal or hierarchical rather than proximal or delegated authority cannot, by virtue of the nature of education, succeed as education.

ARGUMENT FROM THE NATURE OF EXPERTISE

It has become commonplace among observations on the actions of legislators that they boldly pass bills to regulate and prescribe the conduct of education because they, as so many citizens, believe either that they are experts on education (having themselves spent years in the classroom) or that educating does not require any special expertise. While teaching can and must be carried on in daily life as an amateur activity, the prudent society will, contrary to what some legislators may believe, invest cultural capital in education by supporting the special preparation of teachers. This special knowledge—not necessarily highly specialized, esoteric education—renders experts, relatively speaking. Unlike the lay person, the prepared educator studies at least some form (or forms) of inquiry in sufficient depth to be able accurately to introduce others into it, understands pertinent learning theory, appreciates the likely impact of socioeconomic status on students' motivations and interest in education, knows how to recognize identified learning disabilities, and so on. As in the case of the society that seeks to maintain a truly safe water supply, the society that chooses to educate its young in the truest sense must attempt to do so in a way that supports the highest quality of practice that the knowledge base will support. Such an enlightened approach to educating dictates that the society cultivate expert teachers.

If, then, we are to make an argument for legislators, state offices of education and their agents, district school boards and administrators to delegate the authority for educating to the teachers on the grounds that the very nature of expertise recommends it, it is pertinent to ask what distinguished the work of experts from that of amateurs or novices. It will not suffice merely to note that experts possess knowledge, theoretical and factual, that novices do not. If knowledge were the only difference, then it might be argued that distal actors could reasonably employ experts to design instructional packages which could then be imposed on teachers as rules to be followed. The crucial difference rests instead with the way expert teachers and experts generally address situations—an approach that not only defies packaged pedagogic problem solving, but also denies the existence of predefined problems.

From a variety of fields of inquiry, an illuminating and suggestive picture of expertise is emerging. In a paper that draws together and summarizes a wide range of works on the acquisition of expertise, Alan Lesgold notes that unlike novices, experts invest significant attention and resources in constructing representations of problems in situations they confront.[28] For example, experts on the Soviet Union, when faced with a hypothetical situation regarding Soviet agriculture, expended considerable attention on structuring a problem to be solved, rather than leaping to trying to solve some assumed problem, as did the novices.[29] Lesgold notes similar conclusions to be drawn from work on experts in chess, physics, radiological diagnosis, and other fields.

In their longitudinal work dedicated to problem finding in art, Jacob Getzels and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi note that the fine artist (their analog, in my view, to Lesgold's "expert"), unlike those who concentrate only on technically skillful renderings, do not work on assumed or "presented" problems; instead, they themselves "discover" or, perhaps more aptly put, *construct* problems to be solved.[30] As it is for Lesgold's experts, Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi's fine artists leave open the question of what problem is to be solved almost until the end of their activity.[31]

In discussing public policymaking, Martin Rein and Donald Schön write of the role of policy researchers, the experts, in generating specific problems from "our worries."[32] Again, experts are not just smarter in problem solving; they pay special attention to creating manageable problems out of problematic situations.

In the cases cited in all three sets of works, the experts use their knowledge and understandings in a particular way: to interpret problematic situations so as to identify problems for which their understandings can render solutions. The richer an expert's range and depth of pertinent knowledge and understandings, the "larger" and more productively identified the problem to be solved. The implication of this growing body of literature for education is this: If educating is to be done expertly, it must be done by the teachers themselves who as experts use their own knowledge and understandings to define in particular pedagogic situations the problems that are worth solving and soluble. When being conducted expertly, then, most likely no two episodes of educating will look alike. By its very nature, expertise cannot be exercised mechanistically or according to prescribed programs and algorithms. Distal actors who would themselves attempt to conduct education from afar, through regulations and surveillance, or who would hire experts to do the same, fundamentally misunderstand the nature of problems in the real world and do not appreciate what is required for the definition and solution of such problems. As Schön expresses, "real problems do not come well-formed. They . . . present themselves, on the contrary, as messy, indeterminate situations."[33] It is the expert, prepared with pertinent knowledge and understandings, who renders soluble problems worth our attention. Hence, as before, we must conclude that educating should be delegated to teachers, this time with the proviso that the teachers be expert educators.

Responsibilities of the Teachers

To argue, as I have, that the schooling hierarchy should be in the business of promoting the conditions for educating and handing the task of educating over to the teachers does not imply a carte blanche. The delegation of authority for educating to the teachers places enormous responsibilities on the teachers' shoulders—responsibilities for which teachers and the teaching profession ought to be held accountable. But teachers can reasonably be expected to carry out these educationally serious and demanding responsibilities only if the conditions of their work change. For example, it is highly unlikely that teachers can function as educators under the conditions of prescribed textbooks, habits of testing for facts only, large classes meeting for short periods, intrusive school-keeping functions, the distal imposition of student learning objectives, and the like. The task of cleaning up the educational environment, as noted earlier, must be shared by numerous actors in the schooling hierarchy and others in the society whose actions bear on the prospects for education. Assuming that the conditions for educating can be reformed, it is important to be clear about the nature and scope of educational responsibilities that teachers should be expected to carry out. There are three pedagogic responsibilities—epistemic, moral, and political—and a professional responsibility, all of which are interrelated and can be presented here only in briefest sketch.

THE EPISTEMIC RESPONSIBILITY

There are fundamental pedagogic ramifications of understanding the basic task of schooling as educating qua the initiation of students into the forms of knowledge or ways of understanding that make sense of experience. Teaching aimed at enabling students to recognize the differences between thinking scientifically, aesthetically, morally, mathematically, and so on and enabling students themselves to think critically with these modes of inquiry imply a basic set of epistemic responsibilities.

To begin, whatever subjects they address, *teachers are responsible for grounding their pedagogic choices in the need to initiate students into the ways of knowing*. Thus, treating history, for example, as an accumulation of facts does not pass muster; instead, history must be approached as a mode of interpreting the past, only one of the by-products of which is "facts." The goal of helping students learn how to *do* history and to appreciate historical writings as examples of doing history—of interpretation—rather than as raw statements of facts to be mastered suggests a very different approach to the full range of pedagogic tasks, from the selection of materials to approaches to eliciting students' interest to the assessment of student learning.

This conception of education makes pedagogy an exercise in interpretation on two levels. First, it *requires teachers to understand the* *subject disciplines as modes of interpretation*; second, it renders the principal pedagogic task as that of *interpreting the subject discipline as itself a mode of interpretation.*[34] For example, when teachers on the lowest levels of schooling are introducing their students to elementary Newtonian physics, it is unacceptable merely to report "the facts" about the physical world, such as bigger children have to sit closer to the center of the plank if they want to teeter-totter with smaller children. Rather, the teacher is responsible for presenting physics as a way of inquiring that has generated such beliefs and that those beliefs are held for particular kinds of reasons.

In the case of expressly teaching a subject discipline, such as physics to high school students, the components of the teacher's interpretative task become yet clearer. *Teachers must themselves have a conception of the discipline that is at least minimally acceptable on standards of the knowledge community*, here the community of physicists. As the work of Lee Shulman and his research team at Stanford University shows, some who currently set out to teach have such feeble and misguided beliefs about the structures of their respective subject disciplines that whatever they do in the classroom, they could hardly be said to be teaching their disciplines.[35] As well, *teachers must be responsible for identifying and acknowledging initial student beliefs about the subject discipline* in question, in order to be able to perform the crucial pedagogic task, that is, *faithfully interpreting the subject discipline for the students* in light of the students' beliefs. Without having a picture of the pertinent student beliefs and the students' grounds for those beliefs, teachers cannot know what misconceptions need to be addressed and what level of sophistication the interpretation should assume.

Discharging responsibility for the crucial pedagogic task of interpreting subject disciplines for students assumes an "interpretive" repertory of texts, analogies, even parables, and much more. As the Shulman team casts part of the task, the teacher is responsible for *preparing* and, in the case of curricular materials prepared by others, *repairing* the text.[36]

THE MORAL RESPONSIBILITY

In educating, the teacher is carrying out the moral responsibility of teaching. That is, in attending to the student's development as an autonomous, critical agent, the teacher is helping develop a requisite of moral agency. The understanding that beliefs and values can and should emerge from disciplined thought and are not "mere opinions" liberates a person from the grip of prejudice and bias. It is, then, teachers' moral responsibility not just to introduce students to the forms of knowledge as the disciplined ways with which others inquire and structure experience, but also to help all students understand the importance of making their *own* choices as well on the basis of disciplined beliefs and values. That is, to act as a moral agent is to assume oneself the role of critical inquirer. Hence, the teacher is responsible not only for introducing students to the forms of critical inquiry, but also for inviting and encouraging students to demand such disciplined thought of themselves.

THE POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITY

As Israel Scheffler casts it, "the function of education in a democracy is . . . to liberate the mind, strengthen its critical powers, inform it with knowledge and the capacity for independent inquiry, engage its human sympathies and illuminate its moral and practical choices."[37] If teachers are shouldering their epistemic and moral responsibilities, this function will be served. The additional responsibility that a democratic context visits upon the teacher regards the political requirement that *all* citizens be enfranchised. That is, education so understood is "not to be limited to any given subclass of members, but to be extended, insofar as possible, to all citizens."[38] Thus, it is the teachers' responsibility not to settle for less for *any* student, but to hold fast to the expectation and goal that every student can and will acquire the disciplined, critical capacities that characterize the educated person. To excuse any student from this expectation, whether on grounds of the student's being socially or economically disadvantaged or on grounds that the student does not seem interested or on any other such basis, constitutes a shirking of a core pedagogic responsibility.

THE PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

The need to discharge the epistemic, moral, and political responsibilities constitutes the pedagogic circumstance of the educator. Just what particular problems ought to be addressed to carry out these responsibilities must be left to the individual teachers, as experts, to define. While it is educationally counterproductive for the rest of the schooling hierarchy to interfere with the teacher's educative activities, it is desirable for those at the upper reaches of the hierarchy to hold the teaching profession accountable for the maintenance of acceptable standards of expertise within the profession, that is, standards that reflect the current knowledge base.

While legislators cannot and should not attempt to judge the level of expertise maintained by the teaching profession, they can and should require the profession to establish and operate mechanisms that are commonly used to ensure the health of professions. In particular, legislatures should hold the teaching profession responsible for setting standards for admission that recognize the specific understandings and capabilities required for teachers to discharge their pedagogic responsibilities. Second, legislatures or their agents should hold the profession responsible for developing mechanisms for collegial review and consultation, so as to encourage a productive, constructively critical climate for educational practice. Third, legislatures should resist any efforts by any parties, teachers included, to remove educational decisions from the classroom. Cast from the perspective of the teachers, the profession is responsible for exercising fully its authority to educate the young. That authority represents an obligation, not a mere option. Fourth, the profession should develop standards and mechanisms for reviewing (not censoring) the plethora of curricular materials published and otherwise produced by outside agencies (publishing houses, video companies, and the like). The point here is not to limit the options of teachers, but to avail teachers of information that can expand their curricular choices. And finally, legislatures or their agents should require that the profession set standards for the continuing education of teachers as educators.

Neither legislatures nor their agents are themselves qualified to assess the content of any of these five sets of standards and mechanisms, but they should at least require that teachers so organize themselves as a responsible profession of expert educators. To maintain standards of expertise in particular, it is reasonable that legislatures require that in setting standards of admission and practice the teaching profession consult with subject discipline experts in universities to ensure adequate understandings of subject disciplines and with specialists in discipline-specific pedagogy to ensure basic interpretive repertoires. Also, it is reasonable for legislatures to require that the profession's standards be tied to more generally pertinent knowledge expectations, such as knowledge of the effects of socioeconomic status, specific learning problems, and the like, on the educational prospects of individuals.

Concluding Note

For the appropriate exercise of authority and the needed discharge of responsibility in public schooling, the various roles and expectations of the actors in the schooling hierarchy will have to change. Given the need for public schooling to be undertaken as a public, collective enterprise, there is, I think, little to be gained from trying somehow to dismantle the general governance hierarchy of schooling. But if that hierarchy is to serve the educational purposes that justify its very existence, then great care must be taken to see that the responsibility for maintaining the conditions for educating is properly shared and that the authority for educating is properly delegated to the teachers. Under their current configurations in the schooling hierarchy, authority and responsibility present conflicts that stand as significant barriers to educating. One group of teachers describes several such conflicts as follows:

> Teachers work in an institution which supposedly prepares its clients for adulthood, but which views those entrusted with this task, the teachers themselves, as incapable of mature judgment.
>
> Education is an institution which holds that questioning and debating, risk and error develop one's thinking ability. But learning situations are structured to lead to one right answer, and both teachers and students are evaluated in ways that emphasize only quantifiable results.
>
> Public education is charged with upholding democracy by developing an electorate capable of critical thinking and the intelligent balancing of alternatives, but teachers are required to pursue this goal by increasingly mechanical, technical means.[39]

Collectively we are capable of schooling that educates, but we can deliver on that capability only if we clean up our educational environment by getting straight who should have what authority and what responsibilities regarding schooling. In this chapter I have argued what those assignments should be; I believe that for reforms of schooling to be educationally productive, the reformers must respect these boundaries.

FOOTNOTES

1. "How Not to Fix the Schools," *Harper's Magazine* 272 (February 1986): 39.

2. See, for example, Roald F. Campbell, Luvern L. Cunningham, Raphael O. Nystrand, and Michael Usdan, *The Organization and Control of American Schools* (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., 1985).

3. For a discussion of the "nesting" of educational policies, see Donna H. Kerr, *Educational Policy: Analysis, Structure, and Justification* (New York: David McKay Co., 1976), pp. 54-57.

4. John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971).

5. Ibid., pp. 5, 453.

6. Ibid., p. 5.

7. Ibid., p. 62.

8. Ibid., p. 440.

9. See Barry L. Bull, "The Connection between Education and Justice" and Donna H. Kerr, "Response to Bull," in *Philosophy of Education 1977*, Proceedings of the Thirty-third Annual Meeting of the Philosophy of Education Society, ed. Ira S. Steinberg (Urbana, Ill.: *Educational Theory*, University of Illinois 1977), pp. 235-42 and 243-46, respectively.

10. Richard S. Peters, "Education as Initiation," in *Authority, Responsibility and Education* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1973), pp. 98-99.

11. Michael Oakeshott, *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays* (London: Methuen Publishing, 1962), p. 199.

12. Paul H. Hirst, "Liberal Education and the Nature of Knowledge" in *The Philosophy of Education*, ed. Richard S. Peters (Glasgow: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp. 102-3.

13. Ibid., p. 105.

14. Pat White, "Education, Democracy, and the Public Interest," in *The Philosophy of Education*, ed. Peters, p. 235.

15. Ibid., p. 234.

16. Ibid., p. 237.

17. Richard F. Elmore, "Complexity and Control: What Legislators and Administrators Can Do about Implementing Public Policy," in *Handbook of Teaching and Policy*, ed. Lee S. Shulman and Gary Sykes (New York: Longman, 1983), pp. 342-69.

18. Ibid., p. 343.

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid., p. 346.

21. Ibid., p. 357.

22. Ibid., p. 358.

23. Ibid., p. 359.

24. Ibid.

25. Gary D Fenstermacher and Marianne Amarel, "The Interests of the Students, the State, and Humanity in Education," in *Handbook of Teaching and Policy*, ed. Shulman and Sykes, pp. 392-407.

26. Ibid., p. 403.

27. Ibid., p. 404.

28. Alan M. Lesgold, *Acquiring Expertise*, Technical Report No. PDS-5, Office of Naval Research Contract N00014-79-C-0215 (Pittsburgh, Penn.: Learning Research and Development Center, University of Pittsburgh, 1983).

29. James F. Voss, Sherman W. Tyler, and Laurie A. Yengo, "Individual Differences in the Solving of Social Science Problems," in *Individual Differences in Cognition*, Vol. 1, ed. Ronna F. Dillon and Ronald R. Schmeck (New York: Academic Press, 1983), pp. 205-32.

30. Jacob W. Getzels and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *The Creative Vision: A Longitudinal Study of Problem Finding in Art* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1976).

31. Ibid., p. 91; Lesgold, *Acquiring Expertise*, p. 31.

32. Martin Rein and Donald Schön, "Problem Setting in Policy Research," in *Using Social Research in Public Policy Making*, ed. Carol H. Weiss (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1977), pp. 235-51, esp. p. 237. See also Donald A. Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner* (New York: Basic Books, 1982) and a condensation and recasting of the same in Donald A. Schön, "Education for Reflection-in-Action: An Alternative to the Positivist Epistemology of Practice," in *The Optimum Utilization of Knowledge*, ed. Kenneth E. Boulding and Lawrence Senesh (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1981), pp. 314-32.

33. Schön, "Education for Reflection-in-Action," p. 320.

34. Cf. Maxine Greene, "Philosophy and Teaching," in *Handbook of Research on Teaching*, 3d ed., ed. Merlin C. Wittrock (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1986), p. 495.

35. See, for example, Ruth Steinberg, Judy Haymore, and Rick Marks, "Teachers' Knowledge and Structuring Content in Mathematics" (Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, 1985).

36. For a discussion of "preparing and repairing the text," see Sigrun Gudmundsdottir, "Story Maker, Story Teller: A Case Study in Learning to Teach Social Studies" (Unpublished paper, Spencer Project, Stanford University, 1985).

37. Israel Scheffler, "Moral Education and the Democratic Ideal," in *Reason and Teaching* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1973), p. 139.

38. Ibid.

39. Sara Freeman, Jane Jackson, and Katherine Boles, "Teaching: An Imperilled 'Profession'," in *Handbook of Teaching and Policy*, ed. Shulman and Sykes, p. 263.

CHAPTER III

Evaluation in the Ecology of Schooling: The Process of School Renewal

KENNETH A. SIROTNIK

Introduction

If, as Goodlad argues in chapter 1, schooling is best understood and acted upon as a cultural ecosystem, then how are we to conceive of *evaluation*? Do we reinterpret traditional notions of "program evaluation" or "evaluation research" to fit the idea of school ecologies, or must we rethink the whole concept of what it means to evaluate?

It will be argued here that the latter alternative—reconceptualizing and reconstructing what we mean by evaluation—is the most viable course of action if we are to capitalize upon the view and reality of schools as cultural ecosystems. My proposal will probably be seen at once as both radical and tame. It will be radical in that, taken as a whole, the conditions and practices to be advocated do not generally exist—even to a modest degree—in American schools. Yet the proposal will be tame in that it requires nothing not already present in our human and technological resources. This is not to minimize, however, what will be required—namely a fundamental realignment of beliefs, values, and priorities, and the dollars that go with it.

The basic thesis is this: School improvement must take place in schools by and for the people in them; description, judgment, decision making, and action taking regarding improvement efforts require informed inquiry and critical thinking; this *evaluative* process includes multiple perspectives on what constitutes appropriate knowledge and information; and this process is not a one-shot deal but an ongoing part of the daily worklife of professionals involved in their own school improvement efforts.

I will not, therefore, be addressing evaluation in its more limited context of appraising specific programmatic interventions by outside "evaluators." Indeed, the idea of "program evaluation" in an ecological conception of schooling is, in my view, an anachronism. To think of particularistic interventions being judged, replicated, experimentally contrasted, generalized, and the like, is not to be sensitive to the contingencies and interactions between the circumstances, processes, substance, and people in the cultural ecosystem. The "program," in effect, becomes *schooling per se*. In this context, I will argue that "evaluation" becomes the process of rigorous *self-examination*, indeed the process of *school renewal* itself. I intend, therefore, to address evaluation (and school renewal) as a process of *critical inquiry*[1] that monitors and takes care of the "health" of schools, while at the same time legitimating (and providing) a forum for critical discourse and action by those who work in schools.

I will be addressing conceptual and operational features of this process throughout this chapter. It would be well, however, to have a basic idea of what the process entails right from the start. In short, critical inquiry can best be described as a dialectic around generic questions and activities such as:

- What goes on in the name of X?
- How did it come to be that way?
- Whose interests are (and are not) being served by the way things are?
- What information and knowledge do we have—or need to get—that bear upon the issues? (Get it and continue the discourse.)
- Is this the way we want it?
- What are we going to *do* about all this? (Get on with it.)

X is a place-holder for the phenomenon in question. Examples are: educational goals and schooling functions; instructional practices like the use of time, tracking students, and testing students; organizational practices like principal leadership, staff decision making, and communication processes; and programmatic issues like free lunches, remedial tutoring, and classes for the gifted.

This preview should be enough to make clear that what is being proposed is not a specific technology to be conducted by a handful of experts. It is, instead, a process intrinsic to the worklife of the school. As such, the proposal has a number of interconnected thematic strands that I will touch upon in the remainder of this chapter. First, I will clarify an obvious bias toward the local school as the locus of school improvement, notwithstanding the importance of attending to evaluative issues at all levels of the schooling ecosystem (school, district, community, state, country). Second, I will note that there is, indeed, a sizeable corpus of potentially useful data on schooling including, *but by no means limited to*, achievement indicators. I will dwell on the issue of information primarily in view of our societal "technology and information explosion" and what appears to be the next evaluation bandwagon—computerized "management information systems" for districts and schools. This will lead into a third theme, that of carefully distinguishing between information and knowledge, and, in turn, between explanation and understanding.

But information and knowledge do not evaluation make; a fourth theme emphasizes the role of *critique*, of generating *critical* knowledge through the process outlined above. Finally, I consider the implications of all this for the current conditions and circumstances of teaching and administering.

The School as Evaluative Focus

As suggested in chapter 1, an ecological conception of schooling demands the recognition of, and attention to, *all* the interacting features of the ecosystem, from, for example, the day-to-day learning activities occurring between teachers and students in classrooms; to grade-level and departmental curriculum policies; to school-level organizational patterns, problems, and issues; to district support in terms of human and material resources; to community involvement and influence; to state legislated reform and accountability; to federally sponsored position papers on the state of public education. To suggest that only one of these many levels is the real source of our educational problems and/or is the real target for school improvement is to be ignorant of the political, social, and economic realities of the contexts within which public schools operate.

Having acknowledged the ecosystem, then, I hope it is clear that when I choose to focus upon the school as the locus of change, it is not because I think schools operate in a vacuum. *Doing* evaluation as critical inquiry in schools is impossible without, at minimum, district support and encouragement. Indeed, it has been our experience that just approximating critical inquiry in some schools requires a whole collaborative network of support and resources, including those from local colleges and universities, district and county offices, and the schools themselves.[2]

But the biggest day-to-day repository of constructive power to improve schools is in the hearts, minds, and hands of the people who work in them. It is my view that, under the right conditions and circumstances, this resource could be endlessly tapped; and it is for this reason that I focus the critical inquiry process at the school level. In what follows, I will try to interrelate several thematic strands of the critical inquiry process—information, knowledge, and evaluation—and, in turn, infer the characteristics of the professional worklife necessary to support this process.

Information

The world of schooling is a veritable mine of data or information. (Whether the minerals are precious, however, depends on issues raised subsequently.) Much information is already there, just for the taking, in documents, archives, and the like. Other information can be deliberately created through surveys, interviews, and observations. A tremendous information resource also exists in the phenomenology of the school setting; in the experiences and "educated intuitions" of administrators, teachers, counselors, and so forth; and in the practical meanings that these educators construct daily in their work. This information is just waiting for an appropriate forum in which it can be shared, critiqued, augmented, and acted upon.

One forum that I am convinced is wholly *in*appropriate is the current wave of computerized management information systems for districts and schools, and the related attempts to construct "quality indicators" (really *quantity* indicators) by which to judge school effectiveness. There is no question that we now have the technology to store all the conceivably relevant and measurable (categorical or otherwise) information for any given school on a few diskettes and manipulate the data at will with relatively inexpensive microcomputer hardware and software. With the perfection of laser disk storage and retrieval technology, all the conceivably relevant information for an entire large school district will be stored on one or two devices small enough to carry around in a shirt pocket. My concern is with the "tail wagging the dog" phenomenon, the technological seduction of practitioners (and evaluation researchers) into collecting information simply because it is there. Information is now cheap; knowledge, however, is still at a premium.

Having worked on the idea of school-based, comprehensive information systems for a number of years, I have come to see more clearly how people can make good use of these systems.[3] But I cannot emphasize enough the importance of being aware of how such systems can use people. Abuse can take both obvious and subtle forms, from blatantly misusing confidential data to disenfranchising people from the reflective activities that ought to constitute a large part of their professional work. An example is the so-called "quality indicators" movement sweeping through the evaluation community on the heels of various reform legislation. Elsewhere we have critiqued the notion—from the standpoints of both educational excellence and educational equity—that a handful of quantified constructs can somehow reflect the quality of life in a school, the extent to which that school has been effective, and the likely avenues for school improvement efforts.[4] Certainly information is useful, but mainly in context and mainly by people willing to work in the trenches of school improvement. Otherwise, my guess is that information systems (and indexes constructed therefrom) will be mostly devices to lend scientific credibility to accountability systems concerned more with symbols than substance.

Before turning to the components of what I see as a more viable process for dealing with information, let me be more specific about the nature of the potential universe of information. In undertaking any comprehensive survey of organizational and institutional life, three categories of information can be relied upon for covering most of the necessary features that may need to be described and interpreted: *circumstances, processes (or activities)*, and *meanings*.

The facts or "givens" at any point in time regarding the structures, situations, and physical features of the setting constitute the circumstantial data of schooling. This defines an extensive variety of information likely to vary from school to school such as: student absenteeism, transiency, curricular schedules, and counseling records; teacher demography, turnover rates, salary, and union affiliation; subject/department policies such as scheduled time, articulation over grade levels, and student tracking; school size (number of students and of teachers), age and condition of buildings, availability of materials and resources, and instructional budget; district resources and support resources; and community demography and nonformal and informal educational support resources. This kind of information is usually available in schools, although it is rarely organized and recorded systematically. It is this kind of information, plus the ubiquitous standardized test scores and grade point averages, that by and large forms the management information systems in some of the more technologically oriented school districts and schools in the country.

Equally relevant, but less frequently obtained, are data on the daily processes in schools. These are, for example, the ongoing and dynamic activities and behaviors constituting teaching and learning in classrooms (instructional practices, grouping strategies, use of time, assessment methods, and so forth), and work in the school organization (communication, leadership, problem solving, decision making, and so forth). Process information, of course, is obtained through surveys, interviews, and observations, including participant observations. Thus, the perceptions of trained observers as well as of schooling participants (students, staff, and parents) are admissible data in this category.

Finally, little in the above information can automatically convey how people make sense out of their work or educational setting. In what ways do students and teachers, for example, attribute *meaning* to their experiences as learners in the classroom and workers in an organization? What are their feelings, opinions, attitudes, beliefs, and values that interact with the circumstances and processes of schooling? A few examples are: administrators' beliefs about management (authority and control versus leadership and collaboration); teachers' pedagogical beliefs (student participation and decision making versus predominantly directive learning activities); students' perceptions of classroom learning environments (teacher concern, teacher favoritism, peer esteem, and so forth); academic and personal self-concepts of students; teachers' perceptions of job satisfaction, organizational work climate; and on and on.

I prefer to include achievement data in this last category of information; these, of course, are data that people use, in part, to help explain the processes of teaching and learning. Since this is a rather unconventional way of thinking about the information usually obtained through norm-referenced and criterion-referenced testing, it is important to clarify this categorization further.

What are schools for? Goodlad has answered this question broadly and in the context of historical and present-day expectations for schools.[5] Schools are for many things, not the least of which are the academic and intellectual functions most often assessed through achievement testing. But various social, personal, career, and vocational functions of schooling are also articulated strongly by school constituencies. In "A Study of Schooling," we found that nearly half of the teachers, about half of the parents, and well over half of the students surveyed indicated a goal area *other* than the intellectual-academic category as the most important function of schools.[6] One point needing reinforcement, therefore, is that there is a multiplicity of educational "outcomes," including but not limited to those indicated by test scores, that must be included in the information on schooling.

The more important point, elaborated upon at length elsewhere,[7] is the eschewal of the whole "outcome" notion. Following the essential arguments laid out in the first chapter of this volume—schools as *cultural ecosystems*—it is a contradiction in terms to accord any one piece of information supreme status against which the relevance of all other information is judged. This view necessarily replaces the popular, input-process-output (test scores), factory model of schooling, with a model of complex interacting and interdependent (and often unpredictable) elements represented in the categories—circumstances, processes, and meanings—defined above. As Goodlad has noted,

> The essential differences between the ecological model and the linear ends-means model lie in the way goals are used. In the latter, goals are only something to be achieved; they are viewed as "givens" lying outside the system, used to justify what goes on inside the system. In the ecological model, however, while it is recognized that goals have been set outside the system for the system, these goals also are reckoned with as part of the system. They lie inside as well as outside. . . . An ecological approach to accountability is as likely to raise moral questions about the goals themselves and the human cost of achieving them as it is to throw light on why the stated goals are being achieved at a high or low level.[8]

I have chosen, therefore, not to treat one particular set of evaluative indicators—test scores—separately in the categorical scheme of things. Instead, they can be seen as yet one more way of constructing meaning by educators and, therefore, can be included among the information comprising the third category above.

The foregoing discussion has not been to suggest what data should be collected by schools, but rather to make explicit the extensive universe of information that does exist in and around schools. When one further recognizes the multilevel nature of data—individual, class, school, district, community, and so forth—the picture becomes even more comprehensive, especially when data are aggregated at different levels for different data sources, and when the whole array of information is seen as but one out of many slices in a K-12 grade continuum.[9]

The task, then, for those concerned with local school evaluation is to think big in terms of potential information, but also small in terms of specific information needs. The latter suggests a process—not a laundry list—and it is to this process that the subsequent sections of this chapter are addressed.

Knowledge

Critical inquiry is both philosophy and practice; it is not one without the other. Frankly, this is particularly problematic in a society whose members, in my view, seem to be losing the will or capacity (or both) to reflect seriously and critically upon the meaning and activities of their work.[10] Nevertheless, the idea of "reflective practice"[11] is central to the idea of critical inquiry. As Schön points out,

> When a practitioner becomes a researcher into his own practice, he engages in a continuing process of self-education. When practice is a repetitive administration of techniques to the same kinds of problems, the practitioner may look to leisure as a source of relief, or to early retirement; but when he functions as a researcher-in-practice, the practice itself is a source of renewal. The recognition of error, with its resulting uncertainty, can become a source of discovery rather than an occasion for self-defense.[12]

Dewey, of course, realized early on that "when philosophy shall have cooperated with the course of events and made clear and coherent the meaning of the daily detail, science and emotion will interpenetrate, practice and imagination will embrace."[13] Inquiry and intelligence are synonymous for Dewey and "intelligence is critical method applied to goods of belief, appreciation and conduct, . . . turning assent and assertion into free communication of shareable meanings."[14] I am convinced that critical inquiry will not become a "cultural regularity"[15] in the ecology of schooling until being philosophical is recognized as a legitimate and time-consuming part of *being practical.*[16]

A fundamental part of the philosophy and practice of critical inquiry has to do with knowledge, in particular, people's views regarding what constitutes appropriate knowledge. I have argued in the previous section that information systems must be utilized in the context of a more general commitment to critical inquiry at the school level—a commitment that provides administrators and staffs with significant time and resources for both questioning what they do and collecting data that can help inform decisions as to how they might go about doing it better. In this perspective, *information* is clearly distinguishable from *knowledge*; quantitative or qualitative facts are clearly differentiated from explanation, interpretation and understanding, and critique. The processes of dialogue, clarifying values and human interests, making and acting upon decisions, and reevaluating these actions, therefore, become at least as important as the empirical databases that can be used to inform the processes.

But consider, first, the differences between explanatory and interpretive knowledge. Risking oversimplification, the basic distinctions are these: *Explanation* (or explanatory knowledge) gets at the "what" in information broadly conceived as both quantitative and qualitative, whereas *understanding* tries to uncover the "why."[17] Explanation deals with predictive associations between pieces of information; *understanding* deals with the interpretive meanings of these (or other) associations. The formula $d = \frac{1}{2}at^2$ is an explanation detailing the relationship between information defined as distance (d), time (t), and acceleration (a) of falling bodies in a vacuum. Understanding why this explanation works, however, requires internalizing some set of conceptual (and perhaps even theoretical) meanings like the concepts (for example, gravity) of Newtonian physics. But the distinction is even more profound in the social sciences due to the intersubjectivity of the enterprise. Although those of us trained in the more empirical analytic modes like to think and operate as though the "knower" and the "known" are objectively separable—and in some cases this can be useful pragmatically—it can be argued rather convincingly, in my view, that the premise is fundamentally untenable. Rather than repeating the philosophical arguments here, I refer readers to the references cited in footnote 17.

In a more applied vein, I ask readers to consider the rather depressing record of translating educational research into schooling practice. Indeed, if a ratio of translated research-to-practice were to be operationalized, my guess is that it would be close to zero in the social sciences and substantially nonzero in the physical sciences. Why? There are probably many reasons. But I would argue that the most important ones have to do with how people actually go about making sense of their daily worklife and experiences. Teachers, for example, operate much more in an experiential, interpretive, intuitive—phenomenological, if you will—modality than they do as consumers and users of analytically derived associations between operationally defined constructs.[18]

Most teachers and administrators I have encountered, for example, can "hear" the host of explanatory associations between academically engaged learning time and achievement measures, or between the principles of school effectiveness and test score averages, but cannot *understand* these associations in the context of practice. This is not a problem due to intelligence or ignorance; it is due to the failure to address explanatory knowledge within the cultural ecology of schooling.

What are the meanings of "time on task" (notwithstanding the specific definitions of particular research studies)? How is time currently organized and used in classrooms and school, and how does this relate to the primary goals and functions of the school as viewed by students, educators, and parents? What are "principal leadership," "academic emphasis," and the like? How do these reifications get translated into the unique cultural settings (marked by differing community demographies, staff compositions, principal personalities, district policies and resources, and so forth) of various schools? Lightfoot's ethnographic account of several high school settings illustrates nicely how ostensibly the same construct can be understood quite differently in different contextual circumstances.[19]

Kennedy's notion of "working knowledge" is useful here. Although derived in the context of administration and policy, it is particularly relevant to the daily activities of schooling. With a minor revision, her definition and empirical findings are worth quoting at length:

> Working knowledge is the organized body of knowledge [people] use spontaneously and routinely in the context of their work. It includes the entire array of beliefs, assumptions, interests, and experiences that influence the behavior of individuals at work. It also includes social science knowledge. The term *working*, as used here, has two meanings. First, it means that this is a special domain of knowledge that is relevant to one's job. Second, it means that the knowledge itself is tentative, subject to change as the worker encounters new situations or new evidence. Although [people] may prepare for particular decisive events by studying relevant social science evidence, they must still depend upon their working knowledge for the majority of situations they encounter. Working knowledge often has a greater cumulative influence on policies and practices than does the evidence that is specifically brought to formal decision points.[20]

Some might argue that these findings are bad news; that such inquiry behavior can (and often does) lead to erroneous interpretations, decisions, and actions. Given the present conditions and circumstances of schooling (see below), I might agree at least in part with this point of view. However, my concern is not with the way things are but with the way things might be. The characteristics observed by Kennedy can be seen as describing the unique way in which humans engage in sense-making activities. Under more hospitable conditions and circumstances, my view is that we can capitalize upon these characteristics in a more viable inquiry and evaluation paradigm.

Recapping and stating the argument more succinctly, information—bits and pieces of data of potential relevance to schooling—must be interpreted broadly to include both quantitative (typical survey, test, and attitude questionnaire responses) and qualitative (content of interview, observation, and case study records) data. But it is knowledge, not information, with which we must be preoccupied. Two main traditions of knowledge—explanation (and the empirical analytic methods), and understanding (and the interpretive phenomenological methods)—are not necessarily convergent on either philosophical or empirical grounds. However, in view of the way people ordinarily construct interpretive meaning in the context of making and acting upon decisions, I am inclined to value knowledge as understanding and as a primary evaluative goal in the process of critical inquiry. Yet I am not inclined to devalue explanatory knowledge any more than I would argue for indiscriminant eclecticism. I propose, therefore, a primary commitment to understanding and, then, to *informed* understanding. Information serves as a catalyst for this process just as, most importantly, the process serves as a catalyst for seeking out appropriate information.

Evaluation

Explanatory and interpretive knowledge, however, are insufficient for appraisal, for getting out the value of—*e*valuating—a given phenomenon. What is missing is *critical knowledge*—the consciousness raising and enlightenment gained through reflection on, and critique of, existing knowledge through the dialectical process embedded in the questions listed at the beginning of this chapter. This process of critique is the guts of critical inquiry; it poses both the current and historical context for issues and problems, it suggests the data to inform the process, and it demands explicit consideration of the often hidden values and human interests guiding educational practices. By definition, then, *evaluation is the production of critical knowledge through the process of critical inquiry.*

In my view, the "evaluation research" technology spawned in the 1960s essentially neutered the term by making it a synonym for applied research. For example, Suchman noted that "*evaluation* [is] the general process of judging the worthwhileness of some activity regardless of method employed and *evaluative research* [is] the specific use of the scientific method for the purpose of making an evaluation."[21] This view has been retained by many, in its essence, up to the present. Not surprisingly, the major debate among evaluators has been between those advocating more quantitative, experimental, or quasi-experimental designs[22] and those more partial to qualitative observation and case study methods.[23] Clearly, this is just the same old logical empiricist versus phenomenologist debate resurrected in the applied research setting.

Fortunately, there have been some attempts to reconceptualize evaluation as a valuing activity.[24] One interesting reformulation has been offered by Cronbach and associates[25] in the more traditional context of outside evaluation teams appraising specific program interventions. Although my argument here casts evaluation as an ongoing part of school cultures with or without outside collaborators, a number of Cronbach's "ninety-five theses" are highly relevant. Selected excerpts follow:

> 11. A theory of evaluation must be as much a theory of political interaction as it is a theory of how to determine facts.
>
> 15. Accountability emphasizes looking back in order to assign praise or blame; evaluation is better used to understand events and processes for the sake of guiding future activities.
>
> 18. A demand for accountability is a sign of pathology in the political system.
>
> 26. What is needed is information that supports negotiation rather than information calculated to point out the "correct" decision.
>
> 31. Goals are a necessary part of political rhetoric, but all social programs, even supposedly targeted ones, have broad aims.
>
> 55. Much that is written on evaluation recommends some "scientifically rigorous" plan. Evaluations should, however, take many forms, and less rigorous approaches have value in many circumstances.
>
> 72. Present institutional arrangements for evaluation make it difficult or impossible to carry on the most useful kinds of evaluation.
>
> 93. The evaluator is an educator; his success is to be judged by what others learn.
>
> 95. Scientific quality is not the principal standard; an evaluation should aim to be comprehensible, correct and complete, and credible to partisans on all sides.[26]

Yet, not articulated in these theses is how to deal with the obviously value-laden content of the evaluation enterprise. Thesis eleven, for example, suggests the problem, but does not go far enough; we need to put the "value" back into evaluation. I would propose, therefore, a "96th thesis":

> Evaluation must be conceived and acted upon as the conscious, systematic, and rigorous means whereby we make explicit the operant values, beliefs, interests, and ideologies in the social setting.

Without intending to be overly harsh, I think there is a certain degree of doublespeak in the terms "evaluator," "evaluation," or "evaluation research" when we attempt to address the evaluative function—description *and judgment*[27]—by employing what we hope to be objective, value-free, fact-finding, evidence-producing methodologies. It can be argued that empirical inquiry of any sort can never be freed of values and human interests.[28] Inquiry for action in social settings, therefore, is automatically evaluative.

We must think, then, of evaluation as more than description and judgment; we must think of it, in effect, as the continuing dialectic between explanation, understanding, and critique. Evaluation, therefore, is the production of critical knowledge, by and for those who use it, enlightened by experiential data—quantitative and qualitative, associative and interpretive—so long as a critical perspective is maintained throughout the process. This process must be more than just teasing out values and human interests as "data" in the social setting. Additionally, the operant values and interests must be recognized epistemologically as interacting profoundly with the content and methods of inquiry.

Consider, for example, the competing ideologies in *meritocracy* and *democracy*, and suppose we wish to evaluate the ways in which schools deal instructionally with individual differences in ability and prior achievement (for example, by tracking, homogeneous grouping, and so forth). Or, suppose the focus of study is on the relative benefits of norm-referenced versus criterion-referenced assessment. Without pursuing it further, I submit that the methods, substance, results, and implications of inquiries operating out of these disparate ideologies would likely be quite different and "reconcilable" (to the extent possible) only through further reflection and critique.[29]

To sum up, I am suggesting that the process of inquiry for action in social settings, such as schools, must generate critical knowledge that presupposes existing and deliberately created experiential knowledge of both explanatory and interpretive forms. This entire process, which we have labelled elsewhere as "critical inquiry,"[30] can be termed as *evaluation* so long as the "e-valuing" part is given serious methodological attention. By this I mean a rigorous process of competent communication (see below) between and among stakeholders that systematically addresses the generic kinds of questions noted at the outset of this chapter. These questions demand the analysis and synthesis of appropriate information, the production of explanatory and interpretive knowledge, and the explicit surfacing of operant values and human interests. To be sure, there is every reason to expect divergent knowledge in a context of tensions between competing epistemologies. I believe, however, that under the right conditions and circumstances, these can be constructive and productive tensions and, in essence, constitute the evaluative dialectic.

Professionalism

So what are the right conditions and circumstances, especially in the settings we have in mind, that is, in schools? There are probably many, in different forms and different configurations. I am convinced, however, that whatever they are, they are *not* the conditions that currently exist.

Thesis eighty proposed by Cronbach and his associates is worth noting here:

> Society will obtain the assistance that evaluations can give only when there is a strong evaluation profession, clear about its social role and the nature of its work.[31]

I would propose, in the context of the present discussion, an alternative wording of this proposition:

> Schools will obtain the assistance that evaluations can give only when there is a strong profession of educators, clear about its social role and the nature of its work.

Moreover, a strong profession of educators will *not* develop unless society puts its money where its mouth is, unless priorities and resources truly reflect commitments to excellence and equity in education.

The term "educators" is meant to include such groups as teachers; counselors and administrators at the school level; resource staff members and administrators at the district, county, and state levels; and, of course, the teachers of these educators in schools, colleges, and departments of education. The term "profession" is not intended to denote an elitist conception of persons with special knowledge and skills; rather, it should connote the body of persons professing the best of society's educational intentions and committed to carrying them out to their fullest.

The conditions and circumstances under which educators in schools work are crucial considerations for an evaluation proposal based upon generating critical knowledge by and for these same people. By the phrase "conditions and circumstances" I mean to suggest such issues as: the way the school is organized for instruction (intact classrooms, one teacher per class, six periods per day, and so forth); number of preparations per teacher (secondary) or subjects taught (elementary); number of students per teacher; noninstructional duties and responsibilities expected of teachers; frequency and quality of interactions (substantive and social) among members of school staffs; amount of on-the-job time available for reflection, planning, critical discourse, information gathering, and so forth; amount of off-the-job time necessary to do the job right; status of teaching as a profession in the eyes of the community; teacher salaries; and so on.

Recent surveys and position papers on the conditions and circumstances of teaching reflect the rather sad state of affairs in the profession today.[32] From the low salaries, quality of beginning teachers, and morale of experienced teachers, to the high student/teacher ratios, rates of teacher burnout, teacher shortages, the sum total of the conditions and circumstances of teaching could not be more antithetical to the production of critical knowledge than if they were so planned.

What I have been describing as evaluation for people in the school ecosystem suggests a strikingly different kind of work environment. Schools must become settings for education *and* critical inquiry. Certainly schools are learning places for children and youth, and educating them is a primary responsibility of teachers. But schools are also professional workplaces for adults, and these adults have the professional right and responsibility to evaluate and improve their teaching and their students' learning. The rather absurd idea that one's own learning ends when teaching begins was eschewed years ago in the job descriptions of university professors. Why should it be any different for educators who spend even more time teaching at elementary and secondary levels? Indeed, Cronbach's ninety-third thesis, when translated into the context of school-based inquiry and evaluation, would read: Educators are evaluators; their success is to be judged by what they learn (and what their students learn) together.

For this image of schools as professional workplaces to be more than sheer fantasy, large numbers of caring, competent, and reflective people need to be attracted to a well-paid career of teaching and inquiry. Time for significant knowledge-producing activities of the type I have been describing will need to become a "cultural regularity" in schools. I am not talking about the kind of token time that currently exists in the form of several minimum days per semester, one or two in-service days per year, or one planning period out of six per day. I am talking about serious time—maybe one day a week and two paid summer months (for example, an eleven-month year)—for individual and staff planning, dialogue, analysis and synthesis of information, and so on.[33] Surely this scenario sounds ridiculous in light of present conditions and circumstances; but it is quite realistic and eminently feasible in societies that behave more authentically in relation to their educational expectations. (Compare the Japanese and Scandinavian educational systems to ours, for example).

Such changes in the work environment in schools would necessarily reflect a serious reconceptualization and reconstruction of the hierarchical accountability notions that presently drive the way schooling is organized and conducted. Elsewhere, I have noted some of the shifts in "world views" regarding what constitutes appropriate authority and control in an educational environment championing critical inquiry: Accountability must give way to responsibility, symbols (for example, test records) to meanings (for example, critical knowledge), short-term answers to long-term inquiry, closure to ambiguity, confirmation to exploration, authority to leadership, manipulation to facilitation, isolation to collaboration, and cost-benefit analysis to critical analysis.[34]

Space does not permit a more thorough development of the practical implications suggested by these conceptual shifts.[35] However, brief examples of some implications can be constructed for several levels of schooling. The major implication, of course, is the eschewal of the top-down managerial model for running the educational enterprise as factories are run—a legacy of the industrial revolution that has survived in spite of failing the test of time.[36] (Even the private sector has wised up to the issue in reconsidering what it means to run a profitable enterprise in a postindustrial society).[37] Aptly labeling top-down management as schooling by remote control, Cuban argues persuasively that constructing elaborate reform agendas and accounting formats by educational executives removed from the context of educational practice has no record of success and no future as a viable system of educational accountability.[38] In my view, these kinds of accountability practices would be the prime symptoms of the "pathology" noted by Cronbach and his associates if their thesis eighteen were to be applied to the politics of schooling.

Assuming for the sake of argument that educational responsibility is best organized around the usual state, district, and building levels, what then, might be more appropriate roles for executives at these levels? Largely on the basis of Goodlad's recent analysis,[39] the following possibilities may be considered. The chief state school officer must be responsible for achieving a statewide working consensus on a handful of primary educational goals, for articulating and endorsing these goals, and for empowering district-level staff members with the autonomy and resources necessary to address goals within the exigencies of their local context. In turn, district superintendents must be responsible for communicating these goals and sustaining a working commitment to move toward them using a long-term program of school improvement powered by the talent of educators at the building level. Superintendents, therefore, must also be willing to empower principals and teachers with the necessary responsibilities and resources (like *time*!) to carry off the requisite inquiry and renewal activities. Principals, then, must likewise be responsible for securing these resources and providing the *substantive* leadership necessary to maintain the inquiry and renewal process over the long haul. And, of course, teachers must be responsible for developing and sustaining new ways to function in a more participative and collaborative work environment.[40]

Finally, it must be emphasized that a serious commitment to *inquiry* and *renewal* at the school level requires more than just using the terminology. Educators at all levels of schooling must be responsible for endorsing and facilitating rigorous and systematic discourse—or competent communication—as a serious part of worklife and as an epistemologically valid, knowledge-producing process. This is no easy task.

The basis for competent communication in social settings is *trust*, a rather rare commodity among staffs in today's schools. But to the extent that transformations like those above can occur, I believe it is possible for competent people to enter into and sustain competent discourse,[41] that is, discourse wherein people have a good chance of being understood (comprehended) and trust one another as being sincere in their intentions, knowledge of all types is brought to bear on the discussion, and values and human interests are legitimate issues in the dialogue. For this to take place, people must have real opportunities to enter into the discussion; challenge constructively what others have to say and the basis on which they say it; say how they feel and what their own beliefs, values, interests are, and so forth; and participate equally in controlling the discourse. Although these may be idealistic conditions for a competitive society, and certainly unrealistic for today's schools, I think they can be approximated at least closely enough to have significant impact in a significantly altered schooling environment.

Concluding Remarks

The 1980s began yet another cycle of seeing schools, as Sarason has noted,[42] both as scapegoats for society's ills and as sources of salvation in the search for the cures. The recent parade of state and federal reports and recommendations for reform, in my view, offer only more of the same—more time, more homework, more courses, more testing, more standards, more accountability—all within the same old conditions and circumstances of teaching. What we need more of are the requisite commitments and resources to allow educators to exercise the best of their intentions, to engage in the dialogue necessary for reconceptualizing and reconstructing schooling for the twenty-first century. As Freire has warned:

> To reject problem-posing dialogue at any level is to maintain an unjustifiable pessimism towards human beings and to life. It is to lapse back into the practice of depositing false knowledge which anesthetizes the critical spirit, contributes to the "domesticating" of human beings, and makes cultural invasion possible.[43]

It is my view that schools, as cultural ecosystems, have been "invaded" long enough. The invasion has been subtle but profound. It has taken the forms of unwise accountability demands, untenable working conditions, and unrealistic expectations. The response in the trenches has been predictable and ubiquitous—classroom doors are shut and business is carried on as usual.[44] The inquiry process proposed here, I believe, provides a way to open these doors and to realize the constructive potential for improvement in the ecology of schooling.

Footnotes

1. Kenneth A. Sirotnik and Jeannie Oakes, "Critical Inquiry for School Renewal: Liberating Theory and Practice," in *Critical Perspectives on the Organization and Improvement of Schooling*, ed. Kenneth A. Sirotnik and Jeannie Oakes (Boston, Mass.: Kluwer-Nijoff, 1986).

2. I am referring specifically here to work in which my colleagues and I engaged for the Partnership, a consortium of districts (and their schools), county offices of education, community colleges, and the university, under the auspices of the Laboratory in School and Community Education, Graduate School of Education, University of California, Los Angeles. Details of this effort can be found in Occasional Paper No. 1 by the staff of the laboratory (available from the author).

3. Kenneth A. Sirotnik and Leigh Burstein, "Making Sense Out of Comprehensive School-Based Information Systems: An Exploratory Investigation," in *Inventing the Future: The Development of Educational Information Systems*, ed. Adrian Bank and Richard C. Williams (New York: Teachers College Press, in press).

4. Kenneth A. Sirotnik and John I. Goodlad, "The Quest for Reason Amidst the Rhetoric of Reform: Improving Instead of Testing Our Schools," in *Education on Trial: Strategies for the Future*, ed. William J. Johnson (San Francisco: Institute for Contemporary Studies Press, 1985).

5. John I. Goodlad, *What Schools Are For* (Bloomington, Ind.: Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation, 1979).

6. John I. Goodlad, *A Place Called School: Prospects for the Future* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1984).

7. Kenneth A. Sirotnik, "An Outcome-Free Conception of Schooling: Implications for School-Based Inquiry and Information Systems," *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 6 (Fall 1984): 227-39.

8. Goodlad, *What Schools Are For*, pp. 77-78.

9. See Kenneth A. Sirotnik and Leigh Burstein, "Methodological Issues in Studying the Effectiveness of Schooling" (Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Montreal, 1983).

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11. Donald A. Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner* (New York: Basic Books, 1983).

12. Ibid., p. 229.

13. John Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy* (New York: Henry Holt, 1920; Boston: Beacon Press, 1948, enl. ed.), pp. 212-313.

14. John Dewey, *Experience and Nature* (New York: Dover, 1929; LaSalle, Ill.: Open Court, 1958), pp. 436-37.

15. Seymour B. Sarason, *The Culture of the School and the Problem of Change* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1971).

16. See Max Van Manen, "Linking Ways of Knowing with Ways of Being Practical," *Curriculum Inquiry* 6, No. 3 (1977): 205-28.

17. This distinction, of course, is nearly as old as philosophy itself. More recently, it reflects traditions of knowledge as viewed appropriate by the so-called positivists and logical empiricists (for example, Mill, Comte, Hume, Carnap, Popper, Hemphill) versus appropriate knowledge as defined by phenomenologists and hermeneuticists (for example, Kant, Dilthy, Heidegger, Schutz, Gadamer, Mead). Many collections of various position papers and critical appraisals of the issues in these important epistemological tranditions in social inquiry are available. A few examples are: Eric

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18. Donald W. Dorr-Bremme, "Assessing Students: Teachers' Routine Practices and Reasoning," *Evaluation Comment* 6, no. 4 (1983): 1-12; Dan C. Lortie, *Schoolteacher: A Sociological Study* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975); Robert MacKay, "How Teachers Know: A Case of Epistemological Conflict," *Sociology of Education* 51 (July 1978): 177-87.

19. Sara L. Lightfoot, *The Good High School: Portraits of Character and Culture* (New York: Basic Books, 1983).

20. Mary M. Kennedy, *Working Knowledge and Other Essays* (Cambridge, Mass.: Huron Institute, 1982), pp. 2-3. See also, Mary M. Kennedy, "How Evidence Alters Understanding and Decisions." *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 6 (Fall 1984): 207-26.

21. Edward A. Suchman, *Evaluative Research: Principles and Practices in Public Service and Social Action Programs* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1967), p. 31.

22. Robert F. Boruch and Henry W. Riecken, eds., *Experimental Testing of Social Policy* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1975); Thomas D. Cook and Donald T. Campbell, *Quasi-Experimentation: Design and Analysis Issues for Field Settings* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1979); Peter H. Rossi and Howard E. Freeman, *Evaluation: A Systematic Approach* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1982); Suchman, *Evaluative Research*.

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25. Lee J. Cronbach et al., *Toward Reform of Program Evaluation* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1980).

26. Ibid., pp. 2-11.

27. Robert E. Stake, "The Countenance of Educational Evaluation," *Teachers College Record* 68 (April 1967): 523-40.

28. Examples of such arguments can be found in Richard J. Bernstein, *The Restructuring of Social and Political Theory* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1978), and Jürgen Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, trans. Jeremy J. Shapiro (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971) in the context of political and social theory; Paulo Freire, *Education for Critical Consciousness* (New York: Continuum, 1973; 1981 reprint) in the context of third-world adult literacy education; Donna L. Coomer, "Reformulating the Evaluation Process," in Sirotnik and Oakes, eds., *Critical Perspectives* in the context of critical program evaluation; Ann Berlak and Harold Berlak, *Dilemmas of Schooling: Teaching and Social Change* (London: Methuen, 1981), and Sirotnik and Oakes, "Critical Inquiry for School Renewal" in the context of school renewal and change; Joanne Farley et al., *Reconceptualization of Vocational Education Program Evaluation* (Columbus, Ohio: National Center for Vocational Education, Ohio State University, 1985) in the context of evaluating vocational education; Barry MacDonald, "Evaluation and the Control of Education," in *Curriculum Evaluation Today*, ed. David Tawney (London: Macmillan Education, 1976), and Van Manen, "Linking Ways of Knowing" in the context of evaluation and inquiry; Thomas J. Sergiovanni, "Toward a Theory of Supervisory Practice: Integrating Scientific, Clinical, and ArtisticViews," in *Supervision of Teaching*, ed. Thomas J. Sergiovanni (Alexandria, Virginia: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1982) and W. John Smyth, "An Alternative and Critical Perspective for Clinical Supervision in Schools," in Sirotnik and Oakes, eds., *Critical Perspectives* in the context of teacher supervision; and Richard J. Bates, "Administration, Culture, and Critique: Towards a Reflexive Practice of Educational Administration" (Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New York, 1982), and William Foster, "A Critical Perspective on Administration and Organization in Education," in Sirotnik and Oakes, eds., *Critical Perspectives* in the context of organizational and administrative theory.

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30. Sirotnik and Oakes, "Critical Inquiry for School Renewal."

31. Cronbach et al., *Toward Reform of Program Evaluation*, p. 9.

32. Examples are: Linda Darling-Hammond, *Beyond the Commission Reports: The Coming Crisis in Teaching* (Los Angeles: Rand Corporation, 1984); C. Emily Feistritzer, *The Making of a Teacher: A Report on Teacher Education and Certification* (Washington, D.C.: National Center for Education Information, 1984); Donna H. Kerr, "Teaching Competence and Teacher Education in the United States," *Teachers College Record* 84 (Spring 1983): 525-52; Theodore R. Sizer, "High School Reform and the Reform of Teacher Education," the 1984 De Garmo Lecture, Society of Professors of Education, February 1984; Gary Sykes, "Contradictions, Ironies, and Promises Unfulfilled: A Contemporary Account of the Status of Teaching," *Phi Delta Kappan* 65 (October 1983): 87-93.

33. See recommendations by Goodlad, *A Place Called School*.

34. Kenneth A. Sirotnik, "Responsibility vs. Accountability: Towards a Professional Teaching Profession" (Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, 1985).

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36. See, for example, Raymond E. Callahan, *Education and the Cult of Efficiency* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).

37. See Thomas J. Peters and Robert H. Waterman, *In Search of Excellence: Lessons from America's Best-Run Corporations* (New York: Harper and Row, 1982).

38. Larry Cuban, "School Reform by Remote Control: SB 813 in California," *Phi Delta Kappan* 66 (November 1984): 213-15.

39. Goodlad, *A Place Called School*, pp. 272-79.

40. I have in mind here the notion of the "school as a center of inquiry" as discussed by Robert J. Schaefer in *The School as a Center of Inquiry* (New York: Harper and Row, 1967). I do not have in mind, however, developing an elite corps of "scholar-teachers" but rather developing a supportive, inquiry-oriented environment for teachers to engage in school improvement practices.

41. Jürgen Habermas, *Communication and the Evolution of Society*, trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1979). See also, Thomas A. McCarthy, "A Theory of Communicative Competence," *Philosophy of Social Science* 3 (1973): 135-56.

42. Seymour B. Sarason, *Schooling in America: Scapegoat and Salvation* (New York: Free Press, 1983).

43. Paulo Freire, *Education for Critical Consciousness*, p. 127.

44. See the analyses by Larry Cuban, *How Teachers Taught: Constancy and Change in American Classrooms, 1890-1980* (New York: Longman, 1984); John I. Goodlad and M. Frances Klein and Associates, *Behind the Classroom Door* (Worthington, Ohio: Jones, 1970); and Kenneth A. Sirotnik, "What You See Is What You Get: Consistency, Persistency, and Mediocrity in Classrooms," *Harvard Educational Review* 53 (February 1983): 16-31.

CHAPTER IV

Understanding School Culture

PAUL HECKMAN

I had not seen Linda for nearly a year. Now I was asking her to reflect on the changes at her school and the changes that she had undergone during the past four years. I raised these questions with Linda because earlier the newly appointed principal of the school had initiated a series of staff meetings, using me as a consultant. The principal wanted me to see and hear about changes in practices and beliefs that had occurred at the school since I first worked with the staff.

My meetings with these teachers had begun four years previously. The principal wanted to initiate a process of renewal. During the first meeting, I explained my understandings of renewal and some of the substantive issues that the teachers might eventually face. The details of the meeting are not as important as my recollection of Linda. She sat in the back. Those who sat around her said nothing but they communicated nonetheless: "I do not believe in you or trust you."

Four years later, Linda began to talk about the changes that had occurred. She immediately referred to that first meeting. While we laughed about it, we also explored how she felt at that time. "When I first heard you, I was scared. You said that I would have to identify problems and make changes. I thought, I can't do that. I do not need to change what I now do. What I do is what I am supposed to do. And, even if I did want to change, what would I change to?"

These concerns and doubts prevented Linda from trying anything new. For that matter, they reinforced the tried and true practices that she and her colleagues used in their classrooms. These practices had become regularities and teachers resisted alternative practices. As this happens in any school, those interested in improving schools confront the culture of the school and the problems involved in changing that culture.

In this chapter I focus on some of these problems and provide a set of concepts and practices that may help other schools change their cultures so that schooling practices may go beyond what has existed for many years. In order to do this, I propose that teachers examine the total setting in which they work as they embark on a process best described by the word "renewal."

The Hard-Rock Agenda for Change

I propose a set of propositions about the substance of the cultural changes that schools must address. In essence, I take the position that change and improvement must focus on substance *and* on the process of improvement, not one or the other. Schools sometimes focus only on the process of change. During the heyday of organizational development, needs assessment took place in many schools. Teachers, students, and parents stated preferences for the kinds of programs on which schools should focus. Each school assessed these stated preferences and selected the few preferred by most people. Frequently, one area of focus was viewed to be as good as any other so long as the process was one that involved the entire staff.

I propose a paradigm that joins process with substance, eschewing a choice of one over the other. Furthermore, each school engaged with this paradigm will confront some long-standing, persistent issues that are common to most schools. During the past several years, research-oriented reports on schooling have identified common issues that schools face regardless of the investigating team and the schools investigated.[1] Goodlad has highlighted some of these issues in chapter 1 of this volume. They include:

1. Progression through both elementary and secondary education for *all*.

2. System-wide commitment to four comprehensive educational goals for schools: academic, social and civic, vocational, and personal.

3. Curricula with a large common core of studies comprising mankind's progression to the present (art, music, religion, literature, work, invention, war and peace); the natural world (science, mathematics); the global village (cultural and cross-cultural studies); communication (art, music, drama, literature); the nature of humans (biology, psychology, health, nutrition); self-fulfillment (refinement of artistic, physical, mathematical, scientific, or technological talent); and the modes through which understanding and inquiry proceed

(writing, speaking, hypothesizing, evaluating, calculating, and the rest).

4. Redesigning enough schools to serve as exemplary sites for the education of teachers and revitalizing both preservice and in-service teacher education.

5. Equal access to knowledge for *all* students.

These issues have remained with schools for many years, and their persistence prompts the metaphor "hard-rock." For example, the development of *all* children around a common set of goals has eluded schools. In order to make these common ends a reality, uncommon means for their attainment will have to prevail in schools. Unfortunately, children and youth experience very common instructional strategies irrespective of their level of schooling, their interests, or the subject field. Three dominant instructional strategies prevail. Teachers talk while students listen; students do seat work while the teacher monitors; and students take tests that the teacher also monitors. Moreover, under a program of homogeneous grouping, different groups of children receive quite different programs. High-tracked students respond to higher-level questions than do their peers in lower-tracked classes. Students should experience many different instructional strategies designed for the acquisition of common ends for *all* of them. The dominant instructional practices have existed in schools for many years. They are likely to continue unless a different paradigm guides efforts to improve schools.

The School as a Resistant Culture

The idea that schools have cultures functions as an important heuristic in seeking change. Until Sarason[2] and Goodlad[3] used this concept, many approached school change as a structural problem, identifying the malfunctioning structures and then seeking new structures as replacements for the faulty ones. The developers of the new structures believed that schools would change and be better if schools adopted and implemented those structures. For example, when high school schedules were seen as rigid and inflexible, some developers created an alternative—a flexible, modular schedule. Subsequently they offered workshops for school people so that they would know how to teach within the new schedule. They explained the importance of different grouping arrangements and different instructional procedures for each (large-group instruction for large groups and discussion strategies for small groups).

Both Goodlad and Sarason have examined and criticized this approach to school improvement, each from his own perspective. They found little evidence that teachers even wanted, let alone implemented, the proposed structures coming into the schools from outside.[4] In fact, classrooms changed very little.[5] Few teachers used discussion strategies in their classrooms. Findings like these stimulated Goodlad and Sarason to pose the culture of the school as a concept that could explain why schools and classrooms did not change. Teachers, principals, and even students have views of their world that help them understand and guide what they do, what they do not do, and why.[6] Certain teaching practices correspond to these views, which develop as a consequence of experience. When teachers have narrow experiences, they also have narrow views about what they do and, therefore, exhibit narrow classroom practices. Goodlad and Sarason proposed that the very cultural concepts that help explain lack of change could be employed by school-based groups to produce change.

The scenario at the beginning of this chapter illustrates this idea. Linda remembered that first staff meeting very well. She could reflect on that meeting and could willingly share how she had felt about it. At that first meeting, four years before, she could not do this. Moreover, as she now talked, she conveyed that she loved what she did, had learned a lot, had much more to learn, and felt confident about the school and herself. By her own admission, she had felt threatened and insecure about herself and the school four years ago. What could explain the differences between then and now, and how did these changes occur?

The Need for New Views of One's World

Linda had changed her perceptions and the changes in them explain the differences between four years ago and now. Four years ago, Linda had a set of views about schools, about the practices in which she engaged, and about herself that corresponded with those of her colleagues. Linda and her fellow teachers saw teaching as something they did alone with students. Her job was to tell; the students were to listen and tell back what they heard. Today these teachers perceive differently. Linda often uses cooperative learning strategies that reflect her changed perspective. Some students teach other students; others ask for help from peers. The teacher clarifies and supports group activities. The student has become a worker, not merely a passive listener.[7] Linda and her colleagues now talk about what they do in their classrooms. Dialogue has replaced teacher isolation in the culture of the school.

Moreover, four years ago, Linda made sense of only what she knew, closing herself off to new ideas. Today she talks about how much she does not know and what she has yet to learn. She acknowledges the importance of sharing with her colleagues what she knows and does not know. Four years ago, she hid what she did not know. That strategy made sense four years ago; today, it does not even though many of the same people teach at that school. A new set of views now guides what teachers do, views that began to evolve with the process of talking and the group decision making initiated by the principal four years earlier.

How did these old views change? They did *not* change by using the conventional school improvement paradigm that focuses on adopting and implementing specific structures or innovations. That paradigm directs teachers to particular aspects of an innovation. But innovations as such rarely attend to the culture of the school and to the views guiding teachers, even if these teachers have opportunities to modify an innovation to suit their particular circumstances. Teachers resist changes that do not make sense to them. When administrators and others ask teachers to introduce innovations that do not fit with their tacit or explicit views, teachers resist. Until the concepts underlying the innovations are incorporated into teachers' ways of viewing their world, little change in practices will occur.

New concepts do not automatically fit into or replace what teachers now view to be right and sensible. The new and the old struggle with each other. Usually, as in Linda's case, these struggles remain private. Since the culture of most schools encourages the teacher to struggle alone with these conflicts, there is little motivation to change. Several important features of school culture may promote the incorporation of new concepts into teachers' current perceptions. These include:

1. Teachers working *together* must make their beliefs explicit. Usually the beliefs that drive school culture remain unstated and therefore are unexamined. Long-standing beliefs underlie the practices that reflect the hard-rock issues discussed earlier. By revealing beliefs, teachers can examine them, eliminate what appears increasingly to be inappropriate, and incorporate new concepts that support new practices. Therefore, norms for supporting this kind of inquiry must be established.

2. A school must relate to the outside world in such a way as to be open to new ideas. These ideas must be powerful enough to draw to them the attention of those at the school. New concepts about curriculum design, for example, will be necessary if the school curriculum is to provide a common core of studies of the type noted by Goodlad. Ways to bring these ideas to the school have to be developed deliberately. (See chapter 8.)

3. New and old concepts will struggle with each other. Each school must devise ways for surfacing these struggles, which will be especially intense when new concepts challenge concepts now guiding classroom practices. Ways to confront and resolve these conflicts must evolve. The principal's leadership is crucial here.

All these features require cultivation and I explore ways of cultivating them in the remainder of this chapter. New cultural norms will arise as persons within the school seek to renew themselves and the school. In other words, if teachers engage in a renewal process as a way of daily functioning, then understandings about existing perceptions of those in the school will increase and, ultimately, teachers will be able to address some of the hard-rock issues previously identified. What are the characteristics of this process?

The Need to Create a Renewing Culture

One of the purposes of "A Study of Schooling," in which I was a participant, was to describe the characteristic conditions of a sample of schools. The research staff used a cultural perspective to guide the conceptualization of the study.[8] The concept of renewal constituted one aspect of this conceptualization.[9] We attempted to delineate the renewing characteristics of some of the schools in the sample by grouping them into more and less renewing schools.

Our analysis revealed some variables that differentiated more renewing from less renewing schools.[10] One set of variables that did *not* separate the two groups focused on the individual characteristics of the teachers: age, education, political orientation, professionalism, gender, and years of teaching. Conventional wisdom supports the proposition that the injection of new teachers or the deliberate selection of a relatively inexperienced staff will help to change schools. However, the teacher variables we studied did not separate the more renewing from the less renewing schools in our sample.

School-focused characteristics did distinguish between more renewing and less renewing schools. These characteristics included such variables as principal leadership, staff cohesiveness, a "take-care-of-business" attitude, staff problem-solving processes, and adequate assistance. An elaboration of these variables points to the enabling characteristics of more renewing schools. Principal leadership focused on the ways the principal handled conflict resolution, inspired the staff to work hard, promoted risk taking, and showed personal competence. Staff cohesiveness reflected the degree to which the teachers viewed each other positively regarding the ways that they worked together. They perceived a joining of the minds. They looked to each other for help and they received that help.

"Taking-care-of-business," in turn, focused on the fact that teachers in more renewing schools perceived that the staff together got jobs done. They did not drift from one problem to another without solving the initial problem. Instead, they worked continuously together and accomplished what they set out to do. To get these jobs done required resources, assistance, and time.

While these characteristics reflect important schoolwide renewal processes, certain important classroom-level variables did not differentiate between more and less renewing schools. It appeared that teachers in more renewing schools engaged in problem-solving activities together and subsequently solved schoolwide problems but they did not attend together very much to what they did behind their classroom doors. This is interesting and puzzling because teachers and students spend most of their school time in classrooms. It could be argued that school renewal should be related significantly to what goes on in classrooms. The hard-rock issues manifest themselves in classrooms. Nevertheless, class-focused variables such as the ways teachers teach did not appear to differentiate more renewing schools from less renewing schools—a puzzling and disturbing finding.

The puzzle opened up somewhat, however, as we examined additional data in which we saw another trend unrelated to the conceptualization of renewal but very related to the findings about the characteristics of renewing schools. These data indicated that teachers in most schools remain isolated from one another. They do *not* discuss very much what they do in their classrooms. They do *not* discuss significant classroom problems and seek collegial solutions to them. This is not to say that teachers do not express frustration to one another about students and classroom situations. When they do this, however, frustration surfaces not so much as a problem but as a commentary on the day. This may demonstrate that teachers to not have the words, the concepts, or the supporting environment in which to discuss their day-to-day classroom activities with peers. They spend little time talking substantively to one another about what they do in their classrooms.

This circumstance, however, should surprise few. Schools have cultural regularities that promote this isolation. Teachers, on the average, teach alone. They spend most of their school day alone in their classrooms with people who are not their peers.[11] Children and youth carry into school a set of norms that differ significantly from the norms of their teachers. Teachers share the physical space but not collegial space with the young people in their classrooms. In other organizations, adults spend much of their time with other adults who are their colleagues. They share both physical and collegial space.

Another regularity of the school culture caught our attention in helping us to understand why certain class variables appeared to contribute so little to school renewal. The classroom curriculum and the pedagogy that goes with it remain narrow and relatively stable over time. We found, for example, that most teachers talk most of the time; students sit, listen, do seat work, and take tests. This occurs for approximately 85 percent of the 75 percent of class time devoted to instruction. These findings approximate those reported in a study done at the turn of the century.[12] These century-old practices persist in classroom after classroom regardless of where and when schooling takes place. Apparently the classroom itself does not easily respond to influences from outside.

An interesting dilemma emerges. On the one hand, it appears that relationships existed between renewal and certain school-focused variables. Schools that had principals who promoted openness and problem solving, and staffs that took care of their business, solved their problems, and had adequate support (assistance and resources) appeared more renewing at the schoolwide level than did schools not possessing these characteristics to the same degree. Yet, on the other hand, the critically important place where teachers and students spend most of their time showed few signs of renewal. Classroom practices, on the average, remain very stable over time. School renewal appeared to have little impact on classroom renewal, even though one would expect that schoolwide renewal would carry through into the classrooms. If certain elements of school culture are amenable to a good deal of change but classroom elements are not, then the challenge before us becomes clear. How do we bring the problem of improving classroom practices into the larger context of school culture and open up these problems to closer staff scrutiny?

This question directed our attention to how this merging might proceed. We realized that we would have to move beyond the usual ways of changing classroom practices. Most attempts to effect this improvement have the limitations previously noted.[13] Most bring classroom innovations to the school so that teachers will adopt and implement them in their classrooms. Training sessions and workshops promote adoption and implementation of one or another innovation. While these strategies appeal to some who seek to change schools, they do not promote school and classroom renewal.

Elements of the Total Process

Consequently, my colleagues and I proposed a renewal strategy that focused on ways to renew both the school and the classrooms and, therefore, to change the entire culture of the school.[14] This strategy has developed in conjunction with a group of school districts, and with schools in these districts that joined together for the purpose of significantly altering the culture of the schools. This group became known as "The Partnership." The Partnership brought together twelve school districts, three community colleges, four county school offices, and a university. They addressed together four areas: curriculum development, technology, state and local policy, and preservice and in-service teacher education.[15] As all those involved addressed these areas, they developed ways to renew their schools and the classrooms within them.

The findings from "A Study of Schooling" about school-focused variables related to renewal have implications for changing and renewing both school and classroom cultures. In particular, teachers and principals promote renewal when they solve school problems together. As they do this, they must have positive feelings about this activity, have resources and support, and take care of daily business. The characteristics, however, must reach to classroom conditions and problems, too. As part of its functioning, the Partnership nurtured ways for teachers to examine their classroom conditions and solve their classroom and schoolwide problems together. A process of *inquiry* was developed in each participating school. This process is characterized by the following features.[16] First, the teachers describe together what they do. For example, several teachers focus on an aspect of daily classroom procedures in teaching mathematics. They describe the teaching strategies, learning activities, and materials which they characteristically use. This process brings to the surface some tacit knowledge that teachers have about their classrooms but do not ordinarily share.

Second, they discuss together why they engage in these characteristic practices. This part uncovers ideas, beliefs, and values underlying their consistent and persistent practices. For example, teachers respond to questions such as: Why do students spend over 50 percent of their time doing worksheets? What conceptions of mathematics guide this activity? What conception of worthwhile mathematics knowledge is reflected by these activities? And, what values undergird these routine activites? Seeking to answer such questions promotes inquiry.

Furthermore, the answers suggest the need for additional knowledge. As teachers respond to these questions, the tacit knowledge they already have becomes clear. For example, a teacher may realize that students do so many worksheets because the teacher believes that facility with numbers will occur only with repetition. He or she believes that practice makes perfect. This understanding usually suggests problems for further discussion at this juncture of the process. For example, does research support the usefulness of such repetition? Thus, teachers need to have access to sources of new knowledge. Subsequently, with other teachers they would examine trends in this knowledge, juxtapose them against their existing practices, and, if their own practices appeared questionable, seek alternatives.

For example, the excessive use of paper and pencil mathematics exercises in their classrooms began to emerge as a problem in discussions of a group of teachers. They turned to knowledge about learning, child growth and development, and mathematics to create together activities using mathematics manipulatives for all students from kindergarten through eighth grade. The teachers not only put these activities into practice but eliminated some of their old practices in order to make room for the new ones. In sum, their processes of inquiry questioned current practices and led to the design of new ones.

Nevertheless, teachers will have difficulty developing processes of inquiry as a way to change school culture unless a second problem with school renewal is recognized. The concept of renewal often is equated with the idea of self-renewal.[17] This connotes renewal "alone"—renewal without assistance. If schools could renew themselves without assistance, most already have had the necessary opportunities to do so. However, they have received little support for renewal and have not "self-renewed." Because schools have changed so little by themselves, the paradigm that supports an alternative route to change, the adoption and implementation of innovations, has flourished. Since this strategy uses change agents to promote particular kinds of innovations, the school does receive some assistance. Nonetheless, for reasons already summarized in this chapter, efforts stemming from this model, which promotes changes coming from outside the school, have not proved to be very successful. The model recommended and illustrated here focuses on renewal but combines it with collaboration.[18]

In an earlier study of educational change and school improvement we found that the eighteen schools with which we worked did not renew themselves alone.[19] A hub, a linking and support mechanism, was created that functioned as a collaborating agency in nonhierarchical and nonbureaucratic ways. The hub tested concepts of renewal and endeavored to promote those appearing to be most useful. The learnings acquired in this ongoing process of inquiry were then carried over into our recent and ongoing work with school-university partnerships. We propose that the *support of a hub-like agency is one of the necessary conditions for sustaining inquiry and renewal in the schools.* Other conditions support and provide for inquiry and collaboration and, therefore, for renewal and cultural change. What follows is a summary of six of these necessary but not sufficient conditions. These illustrate the conditions that must surround schools if they are to change their cultures through addressing those hard-rock issues of schooling that have been so resistant to improvement in the past.

First, *norms and support mechanisms for renewal must exist outside a single school.* The partnership concept exemplifies this. A network supports a larger set of ideas and ways for promoting renewal among the network members. Ways of doing this are drawn from our work with such a structure called the Partnership in Southern California.

The Partnership is a network of several interrelated subnetworks. A network of school superintendents meets every other month for the purpose of supporting each other as they try to support the schools in their districts. At the meetings, they describe common problem areas and wrestle with them together. In addition they hear from national figures about larger issues related to these problems and to upcoming issues they will eventually face.

At another time, a group of principals and central office administrators from these districts meets. This, too, is a Partnership network. It is related to the first but not every administrator from every district meets in this group. Only the ones most strongly committed to the need for renewal participate. Both elementary and secondary principals meet together in this support network. They bring to the surface problems that become their agenda. From experts they hear information that relates to their problems and enables them to see beyond present circumstances.

In addition, teachers from different Partnership schools join together to address common problem areas that they work on at their respective schools. For example, cooperative learning strategies have brought together a group that meets monthly to provide support for what goes on in schools and classrooms.

Perhaps most important, the school is the focus of all this activity—the unit of improvement. The broader networking activities support schools in the renewal process. Renewal, however, does not happen in the group meetings. These activities develop understanding of the concept and practices that support renewal. These networking activities support each of the groups to renew and change significantly their views so that the culture of each school changes. Renewal happens at the school.

Implicit in the above discussion is the focus on the school as the place where teachers teach and students seek to learn. The *acceptance of this focus is the second important condition for renewal.* The teachers, principals, parents, and other community members surrounding the school become the persons who promote school change. They must change not just as individuals but as part of a place called school. This focus on the school distinguishes itself from changing particular individuals and districts. When renewal and change efforts focus on the school, change efforts move away from large-scale in-service days for all teachers and in-service credit courses or workshops focused on nonschool problems. Instead, district and other efforts encourage each school to focus on its problems and solve them as the teachers together use knowledge to create alternatives.

When teachers are given the responsibility and opportunity to create alternatives without simultaneously engaging in a process of changing their present views, the changes they make will not vary much from the tried and true practices of the present and the past. *The hub-like agency, then, must serve as an alternative drummer* with ideas and support. This is a third necessary condition for renewal. The hub and those associated with it beat rhythms that challenge the conventional wisdom driving most schools. For example, during the past three years, many legislatures and policymakers have advocated and mandated more courses and longer hours for students in classes. The hub associated with the Partnership raised questions as to whether these were the improvements most needed. They shared with these schools data from "A Study of Schooling" suggesting that students may not need more of what they already get so much of in schools. Will students learn more if they sit longer and listen more? The hub served, then, not as a promoter of alternative changes but as a stimulant for thinking beyond superficial improvements to consideration of the need to address more fundamental problems.

A fourth condition encourages renewal. *Each solution to a significant problem affects more than this single problem area because schools are systems.* The solution affects many other areas, because of the fact that the parts of a school all interact with each other. That is, if staff members solve one problem, they anticipate that other parts of the school will be affected and ultimately will change. To give an example, when teachers created manipulative activities in mathematics, they not only solved the student problems associated with worksheets but created other problems requiring attention. For example, assessment devices to evaluate the effectiveness of these new activities differ from conventional standardized assessment devices. Therefore, the creation of ways to assess manipulative activities became a new problem for the teachers to solve.

Teachers need techniques, processes, and mechanisms for describing what they do and determining why they do it to help in uncovering the tacit or implicit knowledge they possess. *The availability and development of these resources is a fifth condition necessary for renewal.* There are methods for describing generally the context in which teachers find themselves.[20] Contextual data derived from these methods can inform teachers about what they now do and provide the inducement to consider changes. Then, it is useful to seek some person(s) from outside the school who will raise questions and point to alternative knowledge that may provide a different point of view, contrast this with present views, and suggest alternatives.

Once teachers identify discrepancies between present practices and more defensible alternatives, the need for something akin to a hub or resource center emerges. *The availability of ways for identifying new knowledge constitutes a sixth condition for promoting renewal.* Such a resource is not easily found. "Specialists in education have been slow in synthesizing the empirical research on how students learn—and even slower in drawing implications for instructional practice."[21] Moreover, many teachers do not know how to do a literature review or how to draw from such a review the knowledge that applies to their school problems, let alone use that knowledge. A hub-like agency can do this, especially if it provides a bridge between a university and the schools.

Universities have a mission to create new knowledge. In pursuing this mission in the field of education, universities will benefit from the kind of symbiotic relationship that is possible through a partnership with schools.[22] If a nonbureaucratic and nonhierarchical relationship exists between a research-oriented university and schools, teachers can have access to knowledge relevant to their needs and problems and researchers can have access to important sources for the creation of knowledge. A hub-like unit can promote these activities because that function is its primary mission. (See chapter 10 for a discussion of what might be reasonable to expect.)

A case drawn from the Partnership discussed earlier illustrates how one group found ways to collaborate. Because the Partnership consisted of a group of school districts and a unit of a university, the schools had access to knowledge production through the hub. Two teachers and an assistant principal determined that the way they grouped their English classes was troublesome for both teachers and students. Specifically, they had problems with the homogeneous grouping patterns employed in establishing classes. They saw that students experienced success differentially from classroom to classroom in ways that discriminated unduly. Students in higher-track classes had more success and felt better about themselves than did students in lower-track classes. Teachers brought this issue to staff members of the hub. A researcher on the staff of the hub probed the perceptions of these teachers to see how their perceptions squared with the literature on tracking, grouping, and other organizational practices, all of which were areas of special interest to the researcher.

Together they determined that the literature on cooperative learning might help them. They met again with the researcher and reviewed some of the literature, where they found some ideas they could use immediately. Subsequently, they redesigned the ways they grouped students and began to use some of the strategies highlighted in the literature. Over the past three years, they have developed their own strategies and have worked with a number of other schools from the Partnership in refining and creating new ways of making learning more meaningful for students in heterogeneous settings. In turn, the researchers have collected data about this activity because it piqued their professional and personal interests.

Summary

I have advanced the idea that current views of those working in schools can promote change or can prevent schools from changing. These views are derived in large part from the current culture of each school, conspiring to maintain the status quo. Renewal will promote cultural change in the school but ultimately what goes on in the classrooms must be addressed or renewal efforts will fall short of effecting significant differences in students' learning. A process of inquiry in each school is a necessary vehicle, but this process must be fed by new knowledge. The need for outside support becomes apparent—support that helps teachers engage in ongoing dialogue (see chapter 8) but does not impose the agenda of outside change agents. I have concluded with a set of necessary conditions for school renewal. These are some of the conditions required if teachers such as Linda are to get over their initial fears and engage seriously in changing their current views and in replacing them with better ones—a process that should continue throughout a professional career.

FOOTNOTES

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CHAPTER V

The Road to School Improvement: Barriers and Bridges

ANN LIEBERMAN AND SUSAN ROSENHOLTZ

Max Weber described a critical organizational dilemma in asking how to control participants to maximize effectiveness and efficiency while minimizing the unhappiness this very need to control produces. But this dilemma is only one of many dualities that confront common school reform. These include standardization versus diversity, autonomy versus obligation,[1] bureaucratization versus professionalization, management by control versus facilitation of professional norms, mandatory versus voluntary change—to name a few. In what follows, we describe what has been learned about the change process during the past two decades and provide a deeper analysis of how these dualities are played out in reform efforts. Our strong belief is that we have considerable knowledge of what stands in the way of improving schools as well as the organizational conditions necessary to build collaborative settings that work effectively for both adults and students.

We have divided our review into three parts. The first is about the search for what schools are like and what we have learned from that search regarding the "barriers" to school improvement. The second part deals with what we call "the effective schools" period, and the third part concerns school improvement as organizational change—the building of "bridges" to school improvement.

Early Understandings of School Improvement

Twenty-five years ago Seymour Sarason conceptualized the enormous complexity of changing schools in a way that seemed fresh and new to both researchers and practitioners.[2] His book cogently described the "culture" of schools and how the social organization of schools was misunderstood. Schools, he said, are characterized by "regularities" that govern the way things actually happen. Teachers and principals develop a way of working, routines are established, classes and lunch hours are organized, time schedules govern how and when people interact. When new ideas confront this routinized culture—unless these regularities are changed—they come and go scarcely making a difference. (Although modern mathematics was the innovation Sarason studied, scores of other innovations have had a similar fate.)

Studies of a decade or more ago began to explain not only the organization of schools and the primitive conditions of schools as social organizations but the much more complex world of the teacher's life and work.[3] They revealed the teacher as one who, while feeling a great sense of self as a potential role model, suffers from loneliness and professional isolation.

As Lieberman and Miller expressed it: "With so many people engaged in so common a mission in so compact a space and time, it is perhaps the greatest irony—and the greatest tragedy of teaching—that so much is carried on in self-imposed and professionally sanctioned isolation."[4]

Working alone, teachers soon begin to distrust both the ideas of and the interactions with others who stand in the way of their major source of rewards—the students. The price of this kind of autonomy and privacy has the potential for exacerbating feelings of vulnerability already present. These feelings that come from always being with children, having a "good class," being "in control" in one's class and out of control in the larger school culture, having an unsympathetic principal—all are very powerful and, unfortunately, are acknowledged by few people, whether practitioners, policymakers, or researchers.

But teachers are only a part of the culture. Everyone agrees that the principal is a critical person in the change process, yet we have had little knowledge about what principals do when they facilitate a positive school climate, implement new curricular efforts, or bring about change from low to high reading scores in the school. Few people have written about the day-to-day work of principals.[5] We are just coming to understand that principals, like teachers, learn their job by doing it. Like teachers, they vigorously hold on to ways of working that are comfortable and perhaps nonthreatening, although not necessarily effective. Some care most about the students, some see their job as mobilizing the community, some see themselves as being the strong figure of authority,[6] but most just try to get through the numerous situations that confront them on a day-to-day basis. It takes great energy and commitment to exercise leadership in a school. The principal's concerns include the physical plant, social organization, community, curriculum, the extracurriculum, new state regulations—the broad picture. While principals and teachers form a significant part of the culture of schools, contexts differ and these differences form another piece of our understanding. The way different teachers and principals work together, the way they understand changes, their different ideological commitments and concepts of knowledge—all these have a great deal to do with what goes on in classrooms.[7]

Among the barriers to successful school improvement that emerged from this early work are the following: there is an unchallenged and unexamined routinization of the school culture for both adults and students; principals are more likely to act as "gatekeepers" than facilitators of school improvement; teacher isolation exacerbates uncertainties surrounding the teaching/learning process; teachers and principals are restricted to "trial and error" learning.

From the mid 1960s to the early 1970s, because of growing federal intervention in schools, it was possible to study innovations nationwide. What emerged from these studies was an initial understanding of the complexity of schools as social organizations. Changing schools was seen not only as bringing in new materials or creating a new programmatic effort, but also as a complex array of political, social, and cultural processes.[8] For the first time, evidence accrued to show that large-scale social policy was difficult to operationalize and implement in schools. Efforts at racial integration, changing school routines, or engaging a whole district in redefining its mission often foundered.[9] Earlier it had been assumed that schools were rational organizations, readily manipulated and easily changed. Few people understood the complexities involved in changing schools. Now there was evidence to suggest that organizational variables could be identified and were the key to explaining improvements.

The Rand Change Agent Study introduced the concept of "mutual adaptation," which helped to explain the process by which the local school changed innovative ideas and adapted them to meet the organizational conditions of the local context. Specific factors, important to successful implementation, included concrete staff training, classroom assistance, teacher observations of similar projects, teacher participation in project decisions, principal participation in new learnings and, in some cases, the development of materials locally. To be "effective and efficient" involved reform not only in new ideas, new curriculum, and new modes of instruction, but also in attention paid to the people who work in schools and to political and social contexts. Reform called for structures that consider the social realities of teacher's lives, their understandings, their commitments, and their modes of learning.[10]

Many early studies called attention to the importance of the principal in facilitating school improvement, but few considered the fact that the principal had neither understanding of what constituted a positive school environment nor the necessary skills to create one in which teachers would be receptive to change. Many principals were primarily involved in maintaining the school, not improving it. Still, it was becoming increasingly evident that the principal was critical to the school improvement process and was uniquely situated to create the conditions that enhanced or inhibited teacher growth.[11]

Effective Schools

During the 1960s and early 1970s, schools were seen as not making much difference in student achievement as measured by tests. What mattered most in student achievement was what kind of home one came from and what one brought to the school from that home background. But prompted by observations of the apparent differences in schools, despite their student populations, a new focus on urban schools developed. A major criticism of the research stating that schools did not matter was that only a few variables were being measured and therefore it was not possible to understand fully the schools' effects on both teachers and students.

As Sarason had been a catalyst a decade earlier, Michael Rutter and his colleagues provided the conceptual basis for a further understanding of the school culture, or "ethos" as he called it.[12] The research, more familiarly known as "effective schools" research, described what good schools look like as they defined them. Rutter looked at schools in London where students were of similar class background and where student behavior, delinquency, and attendance were shared problems. Schools that were effective were found to differ on several significant dimensions. The school ethos was dependent upon: (a) style and quality of school life, (b) patterns of teacher and student behavior, (c) how students were treated as a group, and (d) how teachers managed their classes. In particular, teachers and principals in schools deemed effective held expectations for success. Further, there was a pervasive belief that all students could learn. Classrooms were characterized as places of frequent praise and infrequent discipline and of high pupil engagement in classroom activities. Students had genuine responsibilities. School staffs agreed on both the aims and values of the school and provided clear guidelines for student behavior. They valued both individual and collective student welfare. Teachers were active in selecting staff development topics to be discussed and principals maintained a balance between strong leadership and maximum teacher autonomy. In the United States, other studies found similar factors to be present in positive urban elementary school settings.[13] A new wave of optimism about the power of schools to make a difference in the lives of children emerged. But so did a rash of mandates calling for "effective schools," "raising achievement scores," more "homework," "teachers spending more time on task," and so on.

In this section we focus on what research on effective schools suggests, the limitations of the research, and an expanded definition of an "effective school" where organizational conditions are built to facilitate a more collegial culture among teachers and principal. We begin with an abbreviated case study that includes these conditions in context and shows what they look like when they are enacted in an urban school. The case highlights the vision of the principal, his building of a core group, a consistent and long-term strategy for change, and the continual pressure of barriers from the outside despite the school's success.

Cityside School

Cityside School is a rather typical looking inner-city school in a huge metropolis. It is five stories high. The building is an old brick structure in the middle of a city area. There is no place to park unless one secures a special sticker. (This is the first of the bureaucratic hassles which seem to be a part of everyday life.) When visitors enter the building there is a parent who takes names. (This too is a part of all inner-city schools.) In this school the parent is speaking in Spanish to a friend and pauses to help visitors find where they are going.

The principal's office is on the second floor. There is a bustling quality about the large outer office. There are about eight people all busy talking, preparing their activities and interacting with one another in a friendly way. The principal's office is open. People walk in freely, although he can have privacy if he wants it. When interviewed in November, 1985, the principal was asked how the school became so "effective," he related the following history.

He began his career teaching in a Catholic school where he taught for three years. He was making $75 a week and needed to get a job with better pay as his own family was growing. He got a job at Cityside teaching the sixth grade. During this time, the old principal was preparing to leave and asked if he would take on some administrative responsibilities. He was known as being well organized. Up to that time the school had been very unstable. Principals lasted two years. Each time the principal would state his philosophy and then move on. Teachers had little or no opportunity to learn what was expected of them. From 1969-73, one principal had been in charge of five different buildings. In 1973, the then principal called a meeting to which John was invited. He announced that the school needed to be "turned around." A year and a half later he left and John was asked to be principal. In 1975, this large urban metropolis was in the midst of a budget crisis. It was a very tough time. Thirty-five teachers left the school after suffering under an unstable environment for years. John was "ecstatic." This gave him an opportunity to select his own teachers—almost unheard of in this district. He selected a primarily young staff. He then put together a "resource staff." This consisted of an assistant principal and two project heads who were to work with a target population. (The school was eligible for ESEA funds.)

During the first three months, John worked with the resource staff trying to come up with strategies to answer the question, "What are we going to do?" His own view was that the teachers in the school were standing up in the front, giving assignments, testing students, and covering content. Many students were failing, and there was lack of involvement and engagement in learning on the part of teachers and students. John believed that the students needed more concrete experiences in the classroom and also that they needed to be more involved in learning. Open education was popular at the time. His brand was a blend of his own Catholic school upbringing and active student engagement in the learning process through learning centers. He had a vision for the school. His job, with the help of the resource team, was to concretize the vision. The strategy for change was John's own creation. He knew that teachers must be able to see another way of teaching. He also knew that students could be excited about learning, no matter what their background. He got a gifted teacher to set up a room with learning centers where students were actively involved in the learning process. The teacher had a wide variety of teaching strategies which she utilized. Her room was called "Room to Grow." John then made it known that if teachers were interested they could get class coverage and spend time in the room learning some new ideas. They could spend one or two weeks in the "room" if they wished. At lunch time, his core group directed conversation toward the "room to grow." Display cases in the school were filled with slogans and children's work from the "room." Little by little, one, two, and then more teachers began to request going to the room. Some teachers felt threatened and asked for transfers. Some teachers tried to change too fast, others needed lots of encouragement to try new strategies. Besides creating learning centers, John arranged to trade in all the old reading materials in the school. Reading and mathematics were standardized in the school. Everyone read and did mathematics at the same time. During an eight-year period, the percentage of students reading at or above grade level rose from 17 percent to 42 percent. High teacher turnover became a thing of the past. Teachers became a working group.

Faculty meetings were used for grade conferences so that teachers on a given grade level could talk together and discuss their work. Everything was clearly delineated in writing. The principal had clearly written lesson plans from all teachers. (Initially teachers were threatened by this, but once they learned that it was a way for the principal to provide support and help if needed, they became less resentful.) Even when some teachers were negative to the teaching strategies being encouraged, ideas began to pop up all over the school. Pride began to develop. Classes went from being grouped homogeneously to heterogeneous groupings. Teachers soon began to realize that giving everyone the lesson on page 18 did not work. Teachers went from a sole reliance on large-group activities to organizing learning centers and areas. When John took it over, the school had been a highly transient one. There had been as much as 75 percent turnover of students in one year. Now there was 40 percent mobility. During this time the school grew from 1,100 to 1,300 students. John believed that being a principal involved doing the people work in school and the paperwork at home.

John was fortunate in that the instability of the school that he inherited encouraged many teachers to leave. Still others left when they began to feel the pressure of the new regime. But he had a great opportunity to gain a new group of teachers who were younger, more open, and willing to try new ideas. He and his staff made certain that teachers were socialized slowly to a new set of norms in the school. (To those who did not want to change, John gave opportunities to work in their own way as long as they could justify what they were doing.) Teacher isolation was broken by grade-level meetings that focused on curriculum and instructional strategies. Little by little collegial norms began to grow as teachers met, shared ideas, and began to experiment. The principal made sure that teachers were given time to learn. Teachers slowly began to make changes in their classrooms, with help when they needed it. One could walk into the school and see the varying degrees of skill and knowledge and the differences between new "rooms to grow" and old ones.

In spite of the Herculean efforts of John and his core group in this one school, the school district as a whole suffered from a great deal of transiency. In some schools there was as high as 85 percent turnover in a single year. John and most principals complained about the inordinate amount of paperwork required of them. John's school, like others in this large city, was tremendously overcrowded. Strong and involved principals like John felt continuous pressure as a result of the turbulent environment in which they work. There was virtually no time for communication, for the building of supportive conditions—just continuous pressure to handle the myriad problems that are part of the inner-city school. New state mandates for improved achievement scores will now set goals that will be unattainable (given the state's requirements) even in this "effective school." "They do not understand that you need to give *adults* time to grow. It is a long process." (Interview, November 12, 1985)

Expanding the Meaning of "Effective Schools"

The process of change in this school has been described in bold strokes to exemplify the characteristics of an "effective school." However, the descriptors of what makes an effective school only tell us what an effective school looks like when it works. How a school *becomes* "effective," what the principal and his or her staff do, what and how teachers learn, the varying structures that are created, the myriad number of variables that go into explaining a positive working climate, what the district office does to facilitate "effectiveness," the effects of the school's past history, the context of different places, the personal histories of teachers and principals—to name a few—are all a part of becoming. John's vision of an "effective school" helps us see some of the "bridges" that need to be built: the beliefs that all students can learn, that teachers can expand their pedagogical repertoire, that discussion of curriculum can be collegial, and that it is possible to facilitate a process of change over time.

Can "effective" schools be legislated?[14] Will mandates to "tightly couple" schools make them "effective"? Can changed homework policies create higher expectations for students? Will printing low achievement scores in the newspaper create a willingness to improve school practices?[15] There is no evidence that affirmative answers to any of these questions will lead to better schools.

There *is* evidence that the building of a more professional culture is what makes effective schools.[16] Tying effectiveness to raising achievement scores oversimplifies the complexity of building such a culture and puts the emphasis in the wrong place. The reality of schools, as we have come to understand them, is far more complicated. The web of social relations, the pressure for standardization in the face of diversity, the discomfort at the creation of new roles for teachers, the constant stream of society's problems that come to school with students, the impatience with how long it takes for organizations to change, the lure of technical answers to social problems, and the lack of understanding of the processes of changing organizations and their accompanying people problems, all point to how much we are learning but how far we still need to go. We are just beginning to understand *how* to mobilize and organize school improvement efforts at the local level. Short prescriptions and quick fixes mask both the content of changes in curriculum and pedagogy and the organizational processes needed to make real school improvement possible.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT AS ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

As in the other two time periods described, Judith Warren Little's study of the implementation of mastery learning in the Denver city schools has significantly deepened our understanding of how change takes place in schools.[17] Little's study of successful staff development provides details of what Sarason meant when he wrote that to change schools one must change the school culture, both the "behavioral and programmatic regularities." In her study, she documented how principals working with teachers changed regularities by: (a) announcing expectations for shared work and shared talk, (b) allocating resources and rewards for working together, and (c) providing daily opportunities for interaction among teachers. She showed how these behaviors on the part of the principal help break the cultural norms of teachers' isolation and privatism. By rewarding collaboration, teachers gain confidence that collegial learning, sharing, and discussion about teaching are to be expected. Observing each other, planning together, critiquing one another's work become the new regularities, the improved school, the changed organization. The curriculum is not only changed by creating new materials for mastery learning, but the culture of the school is changed as principal and teachers work together as colleagues. Creating a mastery curriculum and working together become the new norms of the school culture. But there are other roles and structures that can also help build norms of collegiality and reshape the social organization of the school.

EXPANDED ROLES FOR TEACHERS

Whether teachers are called master teacher, mentor, senior teacher, helping teacher, teacher specialist, teacher-resource linker, or teacher liaison is not important. All these terms imply new roles that put teachers in positions of authority to help facilitate and develop learning opportunities for experienced and new teachers. In particular, by creating new relationships between master teachers, who are presumed to know their craft, and beginning teachers, we are building a potential for a whole new set of emerging relationships that can replace teacher isolation with collegiality.[18]

Perhaps the best and oldest example of an expanded teacher role is the teacher specialist, one who runs a Teacher Center within a school. The role involves a master teacher being responsible for enhanced teacher learning. This organic model finds these specialists beginning with the needs of individual teachers, giving on-site workshops and assistance, and working one-to-one and in groups. In this process, the specialist models a new expectation that the professional responsibility of teachers involves continuous reflection on their practices and continuous growth and experimentation. The learning center and the role of the specialist create a structure and new forms of professional interaction and expectation. Collegiality and public dialogue about curriculum and instruction supplant isolation and insulation from one's peers.[19]

New evidence documenting the role of teachers as researchers into their own practices in a team setting is providing still another role. Teachers work in teams with researchers, building their own capacity to identify problems and collect and interpret evidence. In some models, the process or the product of the research becomes professional development for an expanded group of teachers.[20] This puts teachers in a position not only to inquire into their own practices, but also to provide for the learning of their colleagues as well. These new roles then begin to set new expectations for what it is to be a teacher. It is not only to teach in one's classroom, but to learn continually to enhance one's craft, to inquire into problems of pedagogy, and to organize for and facilitate continuous development of one's peers.

Another role that has been created recently puts teachers in the position of translating research so as to make it accessible to colleagues.[21] In this role, teachers become the "experts" teaching other teachers the research and creating activities that allow them to understand research findings in the context of the daily problems they face. This, too, over time, will create greater expectations for researchers to deal with the practical situations with which the teacher must deal, and it may also involve teachers in using research as another source for understanding teaching and learning.

NETWORKS FOR ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Most of our understanding about organizational change comes from studies done on formal organizations. It is only recently that we have had evidence of the power of people working together to learn, to support one another, to try out new practices and to improve the working relations among school people. Two networks have been written about extensively: the League of Cooperating Schools[22] and, more recently, the study of dissemination efforts supporting school improvement. The former study provides documentation of five years of living with eighteen schools (documenting the nature and complexity of the different cultures, differences in leadership styles, the difficulty of getting new ideas into a routinized culture, and the beginnings of understanding the processes of change). The latter study, over a decade later, puts the dilemmas of changing schools into "scenarios" that provide empirical understandings for the complex chain of events involved in improving schools and creating organizational change.[23] Huberman and Miles carefully document innovations and their implementation at twelve different sites. (Their study brings us full circle as they build on the conceptions of the three periods we have described.) In their most powerful "scenario," the Supported-Enforcement Scenario, they report a local set of events that started with a powerful district person putting pressure on teachers to change the reading program. Teachers moved from resenting the pressure and having low commitment to the new program, to changing both their attitude and practices—through substantial district assistance leading to greater commitment. Organizational rearrangements, including changes in scheduling, rotating students, and teaming of teachers increased the impact on student achievement. Teacher mastery and commitment was secured by having stable program leadership and the eventual institutionalization of new norms.

Conceptualizing school improvement as organizational change provides us with ways of building a more professional culture. Modeling collegiality and legitimating working on curriculum and teaching together, rather than in isolation, changes a school from one where teachers and principals turn inward to one where teachers and principals reach outward; collective action becomes the norm. "My problem" is changed to "our problem." Expanded roles for teachers increase the reward structure and also make manifest that "trial and error" learning is only one way of knowing. When principals and teachers together define the purposes of improvement the resources, time, responsibilities, and assistance can be focused. The meaning of teacher autonomy changes from one of protection to one of finding the ways to work on collective definitions of schoolwide problems using different teaching styles.

We begin to see with greater clarity what underlies the dualities with which we began. It appears that we have seriously oversimplified what motivates people toward participation and underrated the complexity of the contexts within which school people work.[24] It may be, as Huberman and Miles have so succinctly put it, that:

> . . . the rational, meliorist approach to educational innovation can and should be enlarged—made more conceptually street-wise—by the more conflictual, open-ended perspective. . . . The search for "usefulness" may be harder than that for conceptual powerfulness—for example, we may find out that a lot of critical variables can only be "managed" under exceptional conditions, and that those conditions fluctuate over time.[25]

Career Ladders: An Example of Educational Reform

Let us examine one particular reform that has gained currency nationwide—career ladder plans (CLPs). Our intent is to show the ways in which the same reform effort can augment or inhibit teachers' effectiveness in and commitment to the workplace. The case illustrates how efforts at reform at the local level are affected by decisions and actions at all levels from the state to the local school. We contrast two plans currently being implemented.

In the first example, Hart details the efforts in one Utah district to institute a CLP.[26] Here the CLP was developed by a task force of administrators and teachers from each of the district's schools, headed by the superintendent. In addition to the many structural features that accounted for the district's success was the unwavering leadership of the superintendent. From the start, the superintendent provided central office support and encouraged teacher growth by bringing in resource people to work with teachers and by implementing a clinical supervision model for principals. Teacher leaders and specialists were selected by individual faculties because they were esteemed colleagues. Teacher specialist roles were defined by *each* school and their number allocated by school size with an eye toward serving specific faculty needs (for example, the number of probationary teachers needing assistance and supervision, specific program needs, faculty expertise). And because teacher leaders were empowered by their expertise, they shared decision-making responsibilities with building principals.

Several benefits accrued to schools during the first year of the CLP:

1. During the extended contract days, planned opportunities for teacher collaboration were organized which resulted in increased faculty interaction and group cohesiveness.

2. Teacher leaders provided in-service programs based on topics identified by individual school faculties.

3. Probationary and other teachers began to request technical assistance *on their own initiative* from teacher leaders, who also reported benefiting a great deal from these interactions.

4. Teachers at *all* levels received reinforcement for the quality of their work. Teachers gained more knowledge of their colleagues' skills and talents.

5. Principals and faculties confronted and communicated with each other on professional issues; faculty meetings evolved into substantive decision-making areas.

Several features account, at least in part, for the initial success of the program. First, commitments to the workplace and to innovations are shaped by the possibilities for active involvement in decision making, the sense that people govern and control their own actions and products. Here, in-service needs were defined by teachers themselves: the agenda evolved from problems to be solved or goals to be accomplished at specific schools. This means that *personalized* rather than *standardized* help was available and assistance was useful enough to permit teachers to adapt what they learned to particular classroom needs.[27] Second, criteria for advancement on the district's career ladder included instructionally related collegial leadership. That this element was viewed as central to the plan's success represents a marked departure from the professionally isolated experience teachers typically confront in schools.

There is a third possible reason for the success of this Utah plan. Because leaders' and specialists' interactions with colleagues were integrated into regular activities of the school, teachers' consciousness of their learning as a continuous process was heightened.[28] For experienced teachers new ideas, techniques, and models pulled them toward a mission of professional improvement so essential to their continued commitment to schools. That teacher learning was experienced as a collective, recurrent aspect of daily life seems equally important in socializing new entrants to the school. Beginners who are offered help, and who see requests and offers continuously modelled, are socialized to accept norms about the way in which one learns to teach. Hence, Hart finds that, in implementing the Utah CLP, novices more readily solicited and accepted advice and assistance.

A second example of career ladder implementation comes from recent studies of Tennessee teachers by Rosenholtz, by Morgan, and by Handler and Carlson.[29] The teachers Rosenholtz interviewed were confronting the state developed evaluation and selection procedures for career ladder advancement for the first time. The CLP and its evaluation and selection procedures permitted teachers no meaningful involvement. Primarily for this reason the NEA affiliate campaigned actively but unsuccessfully against passage of career ladder legislation.[30]

A newly created Board of Education appointed by the governor was charged with overseeing and monitoring the implementation of the CLP. A specific criterion for appointment to the Board was that members hold *no* prior association with the education profession. After five months of study, the Board's chairperson testified in legislative session that policymaking for the CLP was "not based on proper information, not based on knowledge, not based on experience, but *absolutely* based on recommendations by the State Department of Education."

Nearly two-thirds of the teachers interviewed by Rosenholtz challenged the fairness and legitimacy of the evaluation system. Over half the teachers charged that the classroom observation procedures and the materials submitted by career ladder applicants measured teachers' cunning and endurance more than their effectiveness: "You can do anything for a few days if you know an evaluator is coming in"; "The evaluators only make three observations, two of which are arranged with the teacher. You can fool anybody for a couple of days."[31]

Worse still from the perspective of classroom effectiveness was the pervasive complaint from teachers that the construction of the portfolio for promotion purposes robbed students of applicants' time and attention:

> The hours needed to develop a good portfolio do not reflect a good teacher, so I decided to drop out. I also think that all those hours take away from the children. The teachers don't go in fresh. Only one teacher in our school stayed in.[32]

In the studies by Morgan and by Handler and Carlson, teachers reported that the time-consuming nature of the statewide evaluation was one reason that many had chosen not to apply for advancement on the Career Ladder. Teachers cited either themselves or their best-performing colleagues as choosing to devote their year to students rather than to developing a portfolio.

Distributive justice. That career promotions may be based on faulty evaluation practices—or that the best teachers may not be selected for promotion—may stir teachers' sense of injustice. If the procedures by which the distribution of rewards are perceived as unjust or unfair, if the contributions of rewarded teachers are seen as no greater than those of the unrewarded, then problems of distributive justice arise.

Unrewarded individuals react to injustice by attempting to restore equity in the setting. Typically, they may alter the level of their own contributions downward in the direction of lower commitment and productivity, or they may leave the situation altogether.[33]

Rosenholtz interviewed some teachers just after career ladder selections had been announced publicly. Each expressed grave reservation and surprise about some of those chosen to advance:

> I think the career ladder has affected the morale of teachers. It used to be your morale was based on whether you felt you were a success. You could be the best teacher possible. Some teachers who are not nearly as good as other teachers have advanced or succeeded passing a certain stage and it's *obvious* that they are not as good teachers as those who did not, and that just shows it's not working. And it's going to make that teacher feel like "Why should I give all I have anymore? What's the use? Maybe I should go and practice doing what it takes to pass the test and not worry about what goes on in my classroom."

In Morgan's survey, 97 percent of the teachers, including those selected for career advancement, felt that the teachers chosen during the first round of promotions indicated that the CLP was not working effectively and fairly. Three-fourths of the respondents reported that the CLP had caused friction among colleagues. Almost 90 percent reported that their morale had been negatively affected by the CLP, and 60 percent reported a substantial decline in their commitment to the profession.

Problems of distributive justice are significant not only because they may reduce the teaching commitment and morale of the unrewarded; they may also inhibit instructional improvement if teachers cannot accept the legitimacy of a conveyor's advice, assistance, and suggestions. How teacher selection for career ladders alters faculty interaction, then, has profound consequences for the ethos of the school and for the learning and commitment of teachers who work within it.

Evaluation and collaboration. For roughly a third of the teachers in Rosenholtz's sample there was a serious and consistent foreboding about the evaluation instruments employed by the state. They felt these instruments were a threat to the positive collaborative relations teachers presently enjoyed. Teachers predicted an end to offers of assistance among colleagues because all portfolio material submitted by applicants for evaluation to the career ladder had to be accompanied by evidence of their originality:

> I'm not in favor of the master teacher plan. It's too much "dog eat dog." I don't like someone getting an idea and wanting to close the door and not share anything with others. It hurts the children. When you do something good, you really ought to say: "Hey, this really works well—you ought to try it." Teachers are not going to do that if they have to document everything they've done as original. It's really hard because if you do something really well, you sure don't want anyone else to take credit for it. That's not the education that should be. That is not for the good of the children.

If the means to select teachers for career ladder placement are ill-designed, if they are not thoroughly informed by an understanding of the nature of the school culture, they are not likely to succeed. Should the costs of career ladders turn out to be the collegial relations needed to enhance teacher learning and commitment, we have the makings of a national educational failure at the very point in our history when we need a major success.

Summary

We can see from looking at both research on school improvement efforts and two particular case studies that show these efforts in context that the major barrier to school improvement is the school culture itself, but that the bridge to its improvement and change is that very same culture. (See chapters 1 and 3.) As long as teachers, principals, and district office people allow the school to go on in its routine fashion, putting in a new course here, a new technique there, or using this year's most popular package, all members of the school will be subject to conditions that teach people that they are interchangeable parts, to be controlled, monitored, and kept in line. Most people will quickly get the idea that the best way to survive is to protect oneself or leave. Years of imposed innovations—to be implemented every September 1st—have taught teachers that they will not be involved in decisions of how or why a new innovation is to be adopted and will not be given assistance, support, or time to implement it, whatever the idea. Most school people have learned to rely solely on themselves and their own experimental learning. What they learn is idiosyncratic. Isolation and insulation are the expected conditions in too many schools. These conditions do not foster individual teacher growth and school improvement.

We too often have a school culture hounded from all sides: policymakers who want to change the school by adding more courses; superintendents who want to make a big reputation by having "excellent" schools in one year; researchers, searching for "effectiveness," who isolate variables out of context, and leave the impression that *all* the variables have been discovered. Is it any wonder that the culture itself frequently breeds distrust, low expectations, routinization, and boredom?

But this same culture has within it the possibilities of becoming a collaborative, humane, problem-solving culture rather than an isolated, defensive one. Building the necessary bridges entails a comprehensive attack on the problem of the school: a long-term strategy for change, an opening up of the system to move from isolation to collaboration, from distrust to trust, from few rewards to multiple types of rewards, from being a teacher who teaches students to one who has choices and opportunities of becoming a curriculum maker, a facilitator, a staff developer, a researcher, a specialist, a teacher leader. From reliance on "trial and error" learning to using other colleagues, project work, experimentation, research, networks, and more, the educative process for adults and students must be a continuous one. The fact that it is a complex process need not mean that it is overwhelming or incomprehensible.

John had more problems in his school than most principals have, but he had a vision of a school where teachers could use many ways to engage students, where teachers would talk about curriculum, student learning, successful pedagogy. His vision involved teachers learning to work together, to get and give help and support. It took him eight years.

The Utah CLP is working because teachers have been involved with creating the plan, because the plan relates to the practical problems of real schools, because the superintendent realized that principals needed help in learning how to work with teachers and because teachers saw the CLP as not "just another gimmick."

Bridges can be built when those involved focus on the relationships between superintendents and principals, principals and teachers, and teachers and students. No one group is at fault, and no one group alone can change a school. All need to be involved in reshaping it, building and encouraging new structures that facilitate collaborative work, creating new roles that make shared leadership functions possible, and providing new incentives for meaningful involvement. For too long we have ignored or misunderstood the nature of the school culture and the processes of organizational change. The same people who are the barriers to school improvement can become the builders of the bridges that will take us there.

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Part Two
FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL RESPONSIBILITY

CHAPTER VI

The 1980s: States Assume Educational Leadership

CALVIN M. FRAZIER

Governance Shifts Since 1900

Early in the century, it was not difficult to identify the locus of the power driving educational decision making. The control rested in approximately 127,000 school districts and 423,000 school board members.[1] State departments of education were slowly adding staff members but still a number of states had few personnel beyond the state commissioner or superintendent of public instruction. At the federal level, other priorities held the attention of Congress and the administration. Education was felt to be the responsibility of the states by virtue of the Tenth Amendment. Although clearly assigned the control, the states were content to organize the system and delegate most decision-making powers to the local boards of education.

Local boards had extensive powers and duties. Boards established the curriculum, employed staff, chose textbooks, decided how many grades of school were to be offered, built the necessary schools, awarded diplomas, and established the administrative structure necessary for the operation of the schools. In the absence of full-time principals, teachers were the main point of contact within a school, and appeals and questions beyond a teacher went directly to the local superintendent or, if there was no superintendent, to the secretary of the board. The superintendent had assigned duties and responsibilities but the local board retained a great deal of control over the district and school operations.

The impetus for educational change came from the board, teachers, higher education personnel, textbook writers, and educational spokesmen who championed various philosophies and strategies.

Instruction and planning were very personal in that most schools were small in size. As district and school numbers began to grow, decision making moved from the teacher to the principal. Coordination was necessary. Decisions made by the chief administrator multiplied, while those made by the local board declined. In addition to this local shift in decision making, other forces were contributing to a growing influence of state departments of education.

The industrialization of America had a direct impact on the expanding educational system and the shift in governance from local to state dominance. Industrial concentrations caused cities to grow rapidly and make a multitude of school districts within a city more and more impractical. Kirst cites the Philadelphia situation in which 43 elected school boards with 559 members were finally abolished in 1911 in favor of one board.[2] Consolidation caused strong city districts to begin intruding on state responsibilities in areas such as certification. Departments of education began to grow in importance and size as a means of providing uniformity of practice within a state and assuring that certain minimum standards were met by all districts.

An industrial America focused, too, on management. Organizations were felt to be more efficient and effective when certain principles of management were employed. Frederick W. Taylor's scientific management techniques[3] spilled over to the operation of schools and school districts. This meant a greater need for the building principal and the superintendent of schools to implement these ideas in response to the public's growing concern with the rising costs of education. Departments of education and legislative acts became the state's means of dealing with the evolving complexity of the state's educational operation.

State involvement can be seen in studies examining the nature of state mandates in the period between 1920 and 1940.[4] Prescriptive legislation was found to increase sharply during this time and dealt primarily with the teaching of nationalism, special observances schools were expected to recognize, and directives relative to the "fundamental" subjects and to religious and ethical matters. In addition, the states dealt increasingly with issues related to attendance, certification, reporting, school consolidation and organization, safety, and personnel matters. Even in the western states that had defied some of the governance shift to the state level, local powers and duties were diminished. Before America turned its attention to events overseas and World War II, school board members and educators had become well aware of the plenary power of the state in respect to educational decision making. Content in the early decades to delegate this power, the states had begun to pull back from such a decentralized system of education.

The state's emergence as a power in the 1940s and 1950s was driven primarily by organizational issues. School districts had grown in number to the point that most state legislatures sensed inefficiency in the management of large numbers. State education agencies were expected to bring some order to the system. Colorado had over 2000 organized school districts and through a major consolidation effort that number was reduced to 181 by the 1960s. Statewide accounting and financing procedures were developed and implemented. As the post-World War II baby boom began impacting schools in the early 1950s, conducting school planning and construction workshops became major obligations of the state agency.

The increase in public schools created a high demand for teachers and produced a growth in teacher education programs across the country. State departments were directed to provide greater structure to teacher education and certification. The education degree became one of the most popular offerings on American campuses. Professors, programs, and school personnel multiplied rapidly to meet the demands, and quality was often a second consideration. While the profession and politicians debated the need for an increased role by the federal government, it sometimes fell to private foundations to supplement the work done by state government. The Kellogg Foundation led the way in seeking to upgrade the quality of administrative training and of the faculty working in school administration programs, and the caliber of the candidates coming into those programs. This effort stands out in the 1950s as one major project outside of government seeking to bring about a qualitative change. Most of the programs coming from state departments, by necessity, had to be concerned with growth and management issues.

In a 1952 document, the National Council of Chief State School Officers outlined the major elements of a state department of education.[5] The first area listed was that of regulatory activities. Leadership responsibilities followed but the emphasis was on the process of planning and the democratic principles to be followed. Public relations, coordination, and data gathering were additional expectations cited.

States and local school districts responded to the pressures of those years. Growth—more students, more teachers, more facilities—

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occupied the focus of the public and educators. Public education was judged on its ability to stay ahead of these demands.

Two other developments in the 1950s were to cause a shift of governance to the federal level. In 1954, *Brown* vs. *Board of Education of Topeka* triggered the first series of changes. The elements of equity, heretofore accorded only casual attention in the rush to have enough teachers and classrooms, were to become facts of life for all local and state entities. While many people mistakenly limited their thinking to racial equity, the South, and integration, the driving force of the 1960s and 1970s—equity issues—had come on stage and it was only a matter of time until other players were relegated to minor roles. What is most important, however, is the understanding that came in the aftermath of the decision in *Brown* and many subsequent actions with respect to where decisions could be made most efficiently and effectively—namely, the federal level. Special interest groups found little was to be gained by exhausting their energies and resources by fighting equity issues on a state-by-state basis. Congress could with one act compel states to adjust their laws and procedures to incorporate equity concerns. Furthermore, the Supreme Court was available to protect civil rights and bypass regional biases.

The second force was launched—figuratively and literally—on October 4, 1957. As Sputnik began circling the globe, the impact of this achievement added impetus to the shift of governance to the federal level. Rather than turn to state legislatures, as some proposed, a number of spokesmen who had been arguing for greater federal involvement to help solve the problems of growth and questions of equal educational opportunity among the states, seized this time to press for Congressional action to spur America's response to the circling Sputnik.

Building on historical precedents such as the Morrill Act of 1862, the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917, and the "GI Bill of Rights" in 1944, advocates for greater federal involvement in education proposed and passed the National Defense Education Act of 1958. This legislation to boost efforts in areas such as science and mathematics was not in itself a profound force for change, but the accompanying psychological shift was of landmark proportions.

The United States made a major departure from a philosophy that had rested on the belief that education was a state responsibility and a local function. Actions by the court or federal agencies in respect to equity issues could be accepted since the litigation involved the U.S. Constitution. Turning to the federal government to resolve a quality concern was a different matter. For many, this constituted a rejection of the state and local role. With one additional development, the state and local energies were directed elsewhere and the door was open for even greater involvement and direction from Washington. The development of note occurred in Denver in 1963.

The number of educators had grown. Many schools and school districts had long since lost the personal relationships that had characterized the prewar operation of schools. Large districts tended to be impersonal and governed increasingly by rules and policies. Teachers sought greater participation in the determination of these directives. In 1963, the National Education Association (NEA) adopted a policy of representation that would move that organization from one of a "meet and confer" pattern to one of collective bargaining and master agreements or contracts. For the organization's membership of teachers and administrators who had an affinity with NEA under its original philosophy involving the sponsorship of many curriculum-oriented associations, this new policy was a major shift having significant implications. The organization became a labor group with its primary mission being that of seeking benefits and gains for its membership of teachers. Professional unity began to dissolve and resulted ultimately in the disaffiliation of associations of administrators, researchers, and specialists.

For local school board members and superintendents, who were focused mostly on growth issues, there was now a new demand on their time. Agreements had to be bargained with local NEA affiliates. Positions had to be defined for the bargaining teams. Differences had to be submitted to mediators and/or fact-finders. Board and administrative life became much more complicated, with management of the local school district consumed by bargaining, building new schools, and hiring new teachers in a tight market. The capacity to solve issues at the local level became limited. The state, reluctant to inject itself further into local issues, often acted in a restrained manner when confronted with challenges regarding local inadequacies.

Not only did this sequence lead to a governance shift; it also contributed to an alienation and a growing disenchantment with public education as the public had experienced it in the positive, supportive years of the 1930-1960 era. Rather than being a source of community pride, the educational system increasingly was viewed with distrust. Special interest groups realized that their chances for federal relief often were enhanced rather than hampered by discrediting the effectiveness of local and state agencies. Congressional testimony in support of new federal programs often began with a litany of the failures of state and local officials.

Further, the bargaining process had introduced another discrediting force. Local school patrons often were subjected to publicized attacks involving the teachers' organization on one hand and the board and administration on the other. To an outside observer watching the passage of various federal acts, it appeared that federal action was the only legitimate force for public good, given the educational disarray within the states. During the 1960s and 1970s the dominance of the federal level in educational decision making was evident not only to the public but painfully so to the professional educator at the local or state level who became a rule reader and implementer of programs designed in Washington, D.C.

Despite the agonies felt by many professional educators, federal actions brought attention and monies to issues that might otherwise have been slow in coming if left to state legislatures. When a billion dollars became available for the education of children from disadvantaged families, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 brought an unparalleled and positive attack on educational needs of children previously neglected. The same can be said for the federal act passed in respect to meeting the needs of handicapped children, although some states had begun establishing extensive programs for the handicapped in advance of federal involvement. Children with a language other than English were given assistance. Sex equity laws and interpretations were put in place by the federal leadership. The Office of Education, an E in the cabinet level Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, achieved a separate cabinet designation in the late 1970s.

But even with the establishment of the Department of Education, developments were building in the latter years of the Carter administration to cause a reexamination of the long-term impact of centralizing educational decision making in Washington. Often, authorized dollars did not materialize. Rules became the center of controversy and litigation. The national deficit became a number one political issue and in the 1980 elections the public looked for candidates who were willing to reduce the size of government, particularly at the national level, and face up to the growing concern over the national debt. Additionally, public attention was being called to the general quality of public education. In contrast to a public's willingness to go to Washington for a solution to quality concerns arising with the launching of Sputnik, this time the focus came to be on the states. After all, the argument was posed, is not the state the legitimate locus for responsibility? If educational quality is lacking, the remediation responsibility rightly belongs to the state. Buttressed by such arguments, by a national deficit of more than a trillion dollars, and by the heavy federal mandating of the past two decades, attention turned to the states as the point of corrective action.

The State's Role in Recent School Reform

The state government of the 1980s is a far stronger governance entity than the state body of the 1950s. In receiving the baton for the next stage of education's evolvement in America, the state legislature, department of education, state board of education, and governor's office are individually stronger governing bodies. Although performing a secondary role in the last two decades in many areas of governance, state government entered the 1980s with a vitality and experience that offer considerable promise to society as various functions, such as education, begin to come back to the states after an absence of several years.

Legislators are more sophisticated in their knowledge of events outside their own state. Electronic networks, conference opportunities, the strength and leadership of the National Council of State Legislators, and the addition of a considerable number of staff members to the support of individual legislators and their committees combine to offset the growing complexity of state leadership. Legislators are much more aware of the legislative acts undertaken in different states. Department heads and others testifying before committees are frequently challenged to compare their proposals to the approaches taken by other states. Outcomes, potential improvements in practice, and justification for funding dominate the discussions. The political trade-offs and special interests still are considered, but there has been a major escalation of feelings relative to a legislative sense of public accountability. As a result of this pressure, few legislators are ready to surrender their votes without dealing with issues of quality and productivity. It is in this context of sophistication and accountability that educators must work as they take up the challenge of educational change at the state level.

Ironically, the heavy federal involvement was perhaps the major force for changing and improving state departments of education. Title V of the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965 provided for the strengthening of state departments of education. The authors of the act accurately decided that federal programs were doomed to shoddy support of implementation unless states were helped to become more effective in carrying out the federal mandates. With these monies added to the administration funds contained in each of the federal acts, it was not unusual for a state department of education to have half or more of its staff supported by federal monies. Department visibility expanded and the quality of the staff members inproved. For the first time in some states, the department of education became a recognized and increasingly respected member of the educational team.

Under the new federal laws, the state board was often the locus of final adoption of state plans or the point of resolution for disputes arising over the implementation of federal programs. Again, the increased visibility of the state boards tended to draw to them individuals who perceived board service as being a potential power base and a source of satisfaction for involvement in a major state responsibility.

The fourth notable actor at the state level is the governor. With the exception of an occasional governor who chose to make education a platform priority, the governor's office had not been a major force in determining state educational policy. School finance was an interest because of the high percentage of state monies involved in the state budget. But beyond the dollars, issues relating to curriculum, teacher education, construction of facilities, or compulsory attendance were not vital public agenda topics for many governors. Within the last five years, however, the situation has changed considerably.

Governors such as Hunt (North Carolina), Graham (Florida), Alexander (Tennessee), DuPont (Delaware). Robb (Virginia), Kean (New Jersey), Riley (South Carolina), Clinton (Arkansas), White (Texas), Lamm (Colorado), Perpich (Minnesota), and Orr (Indiana) have made educational reform and change a major part of their legislative recommendations and personal time commitment. Because these governors gained the national spotlight at least partly through their stands on education, there is no question that more state executive leaders will follow their lead.

Aggressive governors, sophisticated legislators, more involved state board members, and strengthened state departments of education make the state scene a far different one than it was when the educational train left for Washington in the 1960s. With critics urging reform and change, there is political capital to be gained by responding to the polls. Beyond this stimulus, however, is a desire on the part of most of the state actors to fulfill well their constitutional and/or statutory responsibilities relative to education. If something is wrong with education, they reason, then it is their job to fix it. This means active involvement in all aspects of education—not just provisions for school finance.

One other element needs to be mentioned in this analysis of the state educational power structure. Added to the legislative and executive mind-set is a not so subtle suggestion that professionals are not always welcome in the planning of the changes to be made in education. The professionals are assumed to be self-serving and are seen, at a minimum, as having failed to be aggressive in proposing changes other than the addition of more money to the system. Educators have been criticized for wanting only incremental change and for lacking the desire and the ability to make comprehensive adjustments in the system.

There is danger in generalizing a common description to all states but, nonetheless, these are the conditions existing in many state capitols in the 1980s. The national reports by education commissions entered this setting and became the spark igniting major state responses. In some states significant legislative proposals already had been initiated. Cries of infringement on local control barely slowed the waves of reform and change. In most states local control had eroded considerably in the 1950s anyway and some state leaders were less concerned about the impact of state actions on local control than about regaining state initiative from the federal government. The issues were seen as transcending those matters for which the local district alone could be held responsible. The state could not wait while each school district weighed the problem, sorted solutions, and took action—or took no action. The public wanted change, went the argument, and state leaders were prepared to provide it.

There was no shortage of recommendations. One could choose a course of action from any one of several hundred reports identified by the Education Commission of the States as having appeared in the 1983-1984 deluge. Most reports dealt with higher standards. States and school districts were urged to raise graduation requirements, eliminate some of the secondary school electives, lengthen the daily schedule and the annual calendar, test for promotion from grade to grade, and increase college admission standards.

Another set of issues focused on the professionals. Challenges were made to tenure, rigid salary schedules, evaluation practices, bargained agreements that were seen as working against school improvement and change proposals, recertification demands, the quality of the teaching staff, the absence of leadership from principals, poor teacher preparation programs, college faculty members who were out of touch with the schools, the lack of entry and exit standards for those seeking to enter the teaching profession, and more.

The issues are interesting when contrasted with the topics driving discussions in previous decades. These issues of quality engender a far different dialogue from one involving consolidation, the dangers of federal aid, or the adequacy of school finance plans. One can debate these topics and be somewhat detached, particularly if one's own district is not being consolidated or losing money under a finance proposal. But today's issues touch everyone in the educational enterprise. The debates over quality go directly to the purposes of education and the effectiveness with which education has been delivered to students across the country.

The Need for a Collaborative Effort

The educational train has returned from the nation's capitol and for the foreseeable future the driving force for educational change is going to be the state. Much of the state legislation to date has addressed structural changes such as graduation requirements, college admission standards, teacher certification requirements, and salary schedule expansion. If one accepts a fundamental premise of this yearbook (see chapter 1) that the individual school must be the unit affected if we are to achieve a meaningful and long-term redirection, then much of the legislation to date has fallen short. We must extend our reform efforts in at least two additional ways. In the end, school improvement must come from changing behaviors, attitudes, and practices that are not easily impacted by mandated legislative acts. Second, each state, including those with some very comprehensive legislation accomplished in the last five years, must build a base for judging the impact of the mandates in place and identify those educational areas yet needing to be improved. In doing this, a self-correcting process must be established that monitors the quality of the system and has high integrity with the public. Such a process can be attained only when all elements of the education community are dedicated to it. It is clear that a considerable agenda remains to be undertaken in all of the states.

Currently, of the four state power bases (legislature, department of education, state board, and governor's office), the legislature and the governor appear to be the primary state movers. While the statutory acts to date may not have included the education community to any great extent, an immediate goal of each state must be to fashion a partnership between state and local level policymakers and those charged with implementing the programs. The collaborative effort must include but extend beyond the governor and the legislators. Further, it must be recognized that true collaboration works best when each of the parties is strong, confident, and respected, and is a true partner.

Public school educators, board members, and higher education personnel generally are not participating from a position of strength. Too often, the professional education community is viewed by the primary power holders as being somewhere along a continuum ranging from obstructionist to that of a tolerated participant. If this country is to emerge from the present focus on education with a markedly stronger, self-correcting program in each of its elementary and secondary schools, then the first step in each state must be to reestablish the credibility of educators and thereby extend the focus of reform more strenuously to the school and school district level. Otherwise there will be no real and lasting change. Education's representatives must move to a status of co-partners in the state's search for educational excellence in the coming years.

A number of problems must be overcome before educators are accorded equal status in the partnership. Many legislators and governors are coming from a position that says: If the public believes the education system is broken and the state constitution has given the state plenary power when it comes to education, then it is up to us, the executive and legislative branches, to address the problem. The education community is suspect as an agent of change since educators and board members at the state and local levels are seen too often as part of the problem. Overcoming this perception will not be an easy task for at least two major reasons.

As mentioned earlier, much of the federal legislation of the past two decades, particularly in the area of equity and civil rights, passed because the advocates for this legislation argued convincingly that groups had not been served well by educators and boards of education. This public discrediting weakened the education community as a respected ally in political circles. Second, members of racial minorities serving in state legislatures still find it hard to accept testimony from the "educational establishment" on educational issues. Bridges of trust and confidence have to be rebuilt. Some gains have been made. In the reform efforts of the last five years, educational leaders have been involved in aspects of planning and the provision of information. While not necessarily a front-line role, this has been a contribution and a vehicle for communication, nonetheless. It is a starting point and the state power structure appears to be more open to including the education community in the latter half of the 1980s than might have been true in the first half of the decade.

The second obstacle to full inclusion is difficult to overcome and will be more critical in some states than others. In the latter half of the 1970s, the political action committees (PACs) of the teacher unions became more partisan in nature, particularly in the case of the National Education Association (NEA). When a major representative of the education community takes sides in a political campaign, there is a significant risk involved for the organization and for education as a whole. If the endorsed candidate or party wins, an educationally oriented political power is nurtured. However, if a loss occurs a political price is paid. For the organization, its educational positions, however sound, are given little consideration because the source is seen as a political enemy. If the organization is part of the education community seeking legitimate change, the entire community becomes tainted in the minds of some. Being political is one thing. Being partisan is something else. Partisanship, when one is seeking the best public policy possible in the interest of the public good, becomes an obvious gamble in the political arena. It also poses a serious threat to the needed unification of the education community. This becomes an important factor when unity within the education community and the building of respect for the leaders who must act on behalf of this community are the first steps to a partnership with governors and legislators.

It may not be possible to establish the unity within the education community that some refer to when they speak of the "good old days" of the pre-1963 era. The bargaining agreements and occasional strikes have caused divisions between teacher groups on the one hand and local administrators and board members on the other. Local districts and state level forces such as boards of education and departments of education have seen a growing tension and division over governance issues. Public school and higher education interests have competed for funds and have joined in only few endeavors. Parents and business leaders who sought a partnership with education were rebuffed on occasion or were relegated to less important roles than assisting in the assessment and redirection of education. To set unity as a first step for the education community is not an easy challenge. But bypassing this stage allows legislators and governors to posture one education group against the other and make the education community look even less effective than it is perceived to be by many today.

It falls to the state educational leadership to begin this unifying process and an excellent point of departure is a collaborative analysis of the status of the educational system itself. Such an analysis goes well beyond the collection of data from a statewide achievement test but need not attempt to compete with such investigations as *A Place Called School* by John I. Goodlad[6] or *High School* by Ernest L. Boyer.[7] States need to examine studies like these two, the issues being raised by the public, questions educators feel should be examined and, in a collaborative manner with school districts and other concerned groups, systematically collect data and information on major problems. This effort should serve as a base for a unified inquiry into the quality of the system. Too often, unification is attempted in respect to the solutions being advanced when few groups have developed a consensus on the problem. A message must be communicated to the public that the education community is taking the leadership in an honest inquiry into the quality of the system in that particular district or state and, perhaps more important, the results of such an inquiry will be reported to the public. Government at any level is not known for such candor and openness.

Educators and those interested in advancing our educational enterprise should ask different questions than those normally posed by legislators. It is relatively easy to collect information on the achievement levels of students in the basic core subject areas. It is more difficult to determine the ability of students to think critically, solve problems, and behave creatively. But those close to education know the importance of these skills. We have curriculum areas we seldom explore while proclaiming their importance. Specifically, there is need to judge the growth and changes in student understanding and performance in the fine arts, health education, physical education, and the other elements of the comprehensive curriculum we defend so ardently. The reference in the book, *In Search of Excellence*, reminds us, "What gets measured gets done."[8] Omitting examination of elements of the curriculum, elements often well supported by the public at large, is surrendering to those persons who would argue for a much narrower school program.

Beyond the curriculum, it is important to ask questions about other areas felt to be basic to a quality system of education. There is need to take a "snap shot" of what exists now relative to the numbers of schools in which the principal and staff set high expectations for students, establish a climate or school ethos that supports achievement and pride on behalf of the students, confirm a sense of mission, monitor student progress closely, and involve parents in meaningful guidance and support of the school. Would not inquiry into these areas provide a base of data on which to judge change and progress in school-level quality? How often have states collected these data to judge the quality of the system rather than merely focusing data collection on the characteristics of individual students? (See chapter 3.) These qualitative judgments brought in by the education community itself would demonstrate to the legislatures, governors, and the general public that the education community deserves partnership status.

This same openness and inquiry-based analysis can and should be applied to judgments made in respect to the preparation of teachers and administrators. In every state, there has been criticism of these programs. A typical response has been to focus on upgrading student quality by raising the entry standards and establishing knowledge-based assessments to be provided by students at the end of the preparation program. Although the latter analysis should have some relationship to the program quality found in the individual institution, there has been a tendency to avoid asking and researching questions about the programs themselves. Such basic data should be compiled as a means of judging the quality of the changes undertaken. The same collaborative effort recommended for the public schools should be utilized in higher education studies addressing the preparation of certificated personnel.

Collaborating on data collection should lead to a joint analysis of the findings and the development of options to address any weaknesses identified. Likewise, those components working well can be identified, defended, and maintained. Teachers, administrators, board members, department staff, higher education personnel, parents, and other interested persons uniting on solutions develop a sense of responsibility for addressing the problem. In the end, this is what state leadership must bring to the education community, namely, a process by which high quality recommendations and a commitment to change emerge from data and from solutions proposed by those most affected. When this occurs, respect from the public and acceptance into partnership will follow.

There are those who say such an outcome will seldom result from such a process because recommendations will be couched so as to enhance the welfare of teachers, or administrators, or board members but not students and parents. There is this danger. But if the steps of data collection, analysis, and option development are followed with integrity, this manipulation for self-seeking ends becomes difficult. It is for this reason that the biggest task is in getting the parties committed to open inquiry as the first step of the process. (See chapter 3.)

In addition to the facilitating role described, the state must play a coordinating role. Solutions can be piecemeal if the options presented do not have a relationship to other functions of local and state operations. The recommendations and directions identified from the process must be related to other specific state responsibilities in such areas as accreditation, certification, and school finance. Accreditation standards must support the practices adopted. Teachers and administrators must experience a confirmation of their skills in the certification process that supports the growth and maintenance of a responsive, creative, open system. The impact of the school finance funding must be seen as supporting the needs and characteristics of a high quality educational system.

A state role such as the one outlined does not necessarily lead to centralization of responsibility through extensive state statutes. A high probability exists that responsibility for addressing the majority of the weaknesses or for initiating practices for school improvement will be assigned to governing bodies and groups other than the state legislature.

The public must be reassured that the educational community can rise above self-interests and maintain a locally oriented, self-correcting system. Unless this assurance is confirmed, educational decision making will tend to migrate to the next highest level. Most matters relative to educational quality are best resolved by local debate and judgment. The commitment of the state must be to making the local system responsible and responsive. When change occurs and school improvement results from a collaborative effort with state powers and not solely because of state level actions, the state, the system, the personnel in the system, and the students are the winners.

State Governance and the Future of Public Education

The twentieth-century governance cycle for American education has brought the mantle of power back to the state level after twenty years of leadership by the federal lawmakers and executive offices. It is doubtful that a further shift to another governing base will take place in the remaining years of this century. Given that likelihood, it is important that the role of the state be one of nurturing a system whose future and effectiveness must rest on sensitivity, inclusion of groups, monitoring, questioning, innovating, and, unfortunately, survival on less than adequate funding in some cases. To the end that many aspects of power must be relinquished by a state legislature to others in the system—state and local boards of education, educators, parents, and community patrons—state legislators must realize the need to treat education somewhat differently than the other branches of state government.

As for all funded services, the state must hold the entire system of public education accountable as to its effectiveness and efficiency. That is a given and a point all participants in the system must plan for and accept. However, unlike departments such as revenue or corrections that are directly supervised by the state, the department of education (including the state board of education), the local school district, and the individual school unit must be energized as a team to remedy problems and meet the educational challenges on behalf of the state.

Nurturing a decentralized system such as public education to achieve this energizing of others requires a delicate balancing of the major forces involved in that ecosystem. Governors and legislators have to be able to contribute to the system. As elected state officials, they carry a major responsibility for the overall well-being of the system. But that must not dominate the direction setting and decision making to the point that the network is driven by top-down mandates. This approach causes the other actors within the structure to become rule readers and mental pygmies content to let the system rise or fall on judgments made by persons limited in their basic knowledge of factors critical to learning and school improvement.

State officials can make a significant contribution by interlocking the parts of the system. A creative, self-correcting pattern should involve school finance provisions, accreditation practices used in judging school and school district performance, certification processes for approving those who teach and lead in the system, and research and reporting commitments whereby many individuals and groups participate in understanding, supporting, and directing the system. Establishing these interrelationships in such a way that the elements complement each other is no small task and often is neglected in state level planning. Overall, there must be a willingness to disperse power with a commitment to strengthening each point of decision making.

Those involved more in the local day-to-day operation of the system and school improvement efforts in particular need to understand the locus of power in public education, the means by which this power is generated, and the contributions needed from each of the various actors. An effective, decentralized system must be characterized by a collaborative effort with each part contributing to the ecology of the whole. School improvement does not occur in a vacuum.

Two warnings should be cited in examining the leadership of the state in respect to public education. In this chapter I have argued for a school, school district, and state educational analysis by local and state policymakers and educators. It is easy to accept the judgments of others in terms of problems and the recommended solutions. National commissions have filled a needed role in these years of reform discussions. However, the most productive analyses are those conducted with integrity at the state and local levels. Assessment must go beyond the use of achievement tests only and provide more insight into the strengths and weaknesses of the system as a whole. In too many cases statewide changes have been made without identifying the current baseline quality. Without these data and systematic observations, few states will be able to confirm any qualitative change resulting from the reform steps thus far.

Second, state policymakers and educators must combine the introspective analysis with due recognition being given at the same time to the societal changes unfolding in the remaining years of this century. In this chapter I have emphasized the need to build our capacity for self-correction as an immediate commitment but stewards of the system must be prepared as well to respond to evolving demographic and technological factors. Issues of expanded preschool education, early entry of students to colleges and universities, programs to involve retired citizens, language and cultural needs of a growing Hispanic population, and the use of the new technology in the delivery of educational services are valid concerns to be addressed. However, they should not be allowed to dominate the agenda and detract from the central issue of establishing quality in the educational framework. A sound system can respond more effectively to society's needs. A weak system becomes even weaker by dissipating its resources on each new demand made by well-intentioned special interest forces within our society.

Fulfilling the tasks of internal analysis and responding to societal changes requires a competent and confident set of policymakers and educators throughout the educational framework. However, if this broad based strength is not established there is a tendency for greater and greater centralization to occur in an effort to gain control of and redirect the system. Then, while new mandates and mid-course directions are given and apparent changes begin to occur, a weakening of the infrastructure takes place and the overall network loses it energy and vitality. Absent the vitality for self-correction and creative redirection, the system withers.

A new state role needs to emerge from the present, overly directive pattern of educational reform. If a nurturing role fails to evolve, the system could well experience an internal decaying that eventually leads to yet another shift in the locus of power. This time the transfer will not be to the federal or local level but rather to new structures or delivery systems having a power base driven by the individual consumer. The message should be obvious. Those persons seeking to implement significant educational change must be aware of their obligation to do this in a framework of research, inquiry, openness, and collaboration to the end that all levels of the system are strengthened or the change agents themselves will undermine the existence of the system.

The opportunity now exists for states and the educational community to fashion a collaborative arrangement that will enhance American education for the remainder of this century. It is a time for selflessness and a willingness to forego those elements geared to enhance or protect any one group or governance level. The emphasis must be on improving the quality of the educational network and generating a synergistic pattern that will be respected and valued by all those committed to maintaining an effective public education system in this country.

FOOTNOTES

1. James M. Hughes, *Education in America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), pp. 310, 339.

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3. Jacob W. Getzels, James M. Lipham, and Roald F. Campbell, *Educational Administration as a Social Process* (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), pp. 23-26.

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6. John I. Goodlad, *A Place Called School: Prospects for the Future* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1984).

7. Ernest L. Boyer, *High School: A Report on Secondary Education in America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1983).

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CHAPTER VII

The District Role in School Renewal

RICHARD C. WILLIAMS, KENNETH L.
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Conducting a search for a new superintendent is a commonly occurring activity for many school boards. Aware that the superintendent plays a critical role in managing the school district, school boards consider selecting an outstanding new superintendent one of their most important decisions.

When looking for a new chief executive, school boards generally initiate a comprehensive search, which often includes developing and circulating a brochure that describes the school district, the position, and the qualities most valued in candidates. Often these brochures, when describing the desired candidate, take on a decidedly "heroic" quality. The superintendent sought must be: "forward looking, intelligent, a respected instructional leader, dynamic, fiscally sound, able to relate effectively with staff and community." And after some time, districts report happily that they have concluded a successful search and, presumably, the district lives happily thereafter under the guidance and leadership of their newly found dynamic leader.

Unfortunately, such an ending is often the exception rather than the rule. Apparently, many superintendents do not live up to their advance billing and within a surprisingly short period of time (average, 2.8 years) school boards are once again preparing their brochures and launching another search for the ideal superintendent.

After such exhaustive searches, why do many school districts experience continued regular turnover in superintendents? Some will argue that graduate programs in educational administration just do not turn out as high a quality product as they used to, or that upwardly mobile superintendents simply do not stay around very long.

We suggest a different reason for this phenomenon. It exists because the roles of the superintendent and the school board have changed significantly during recent decades, and school boards have not adjusted their sights accordingly. They still cling to the notion that the great leader, in the form of a new superintendent, will somehow restore the central policy-making and direction-setting role to the school board and the superintendent. Realistically, the power to initiate substantial school change directly and exert control over the district's destiny has shifted away from the superintendent and school board. The portrayal of the superintendent as chief executive officer with the authority and power to implement policies that are largely determined by the school board is no longer an accurate description of the realities of modern school district management. Increasingly, the power to direct and control the school district's operations and planning is powerfully influenced by individuals and groups and agencies that reside outside the district office and the district itself.[1] A central thesis of this chapter is that these external changes have profoundly affected the ways in which superintendents and school boards can influence school districts' planning, operation, and development. This is not to say that school boards and superintendents have no influence, for indeed they do. But the critical factors and procedures that enhance their ability to influence the district's program and direction must be adjusted to match modern realities.

In this chapter, we explore the present situation in school districts as it affects the ability of the school board and the superintendent to set educational policies and determine the direction of the school district's programs. First, we describe how events during the past three decades have reshaped the political and social realities of school districts, and assess their effects on school district leadership; second, based on the new social and political realities, we discuss how school district leaders must analyze various policy situations in order to determine realistically the ways in which a policy problem can be resolved. Then, we describe how a sample school district confronted these problems by restructuring itself and implementing new procedures that disperse the leadership to many segments of the district, ultimately increasing the district's ability to respond to challenges and to renew itself. Finally, drawing on that sample district, we extract "generic" activities that constitute the essential elements of this process.

The Evolution of the Superintendent's Role

It is sometimes difficult for those who have lived their adult life during the past thirty years to reconstruct accurately what conditions were even a few decades ago. Important changes seem to accumulate or evolve quite undramatically. Things seem the same, but upon reflection we become aware that all those seemingly small changes have accumulated to the point where sometimes the commonplaces in our lives are different in important ways from what they used to be. Such is the case with the degrees of freedom with which school districts can determine their own destinies.

In comparing school districts and the role of the superintendency in 1959 and in 1981, Hess makes the following observation:

> The practice of educational administration in 1959 reflected these conditions. Buoyed by public support, school superintendents and principals became the unquestioned leaders of a vibrant, expanding sector of national life. As educational managers at the community level, they were entrusted with countless major construction projects. As local directors of instruction, they were charged with producing a national technological renaissance that would enable the United States to keep up with the Soviets.
>
> Superintendents derived these responsibilities from their roles as intellectual experts and community leaders. Their professional training and doctoral degrees made them respected sources of knowledge in thousands of localities. At the same time, they functioned as professional leadership figures, individuals whose authority could be relied on in educational as well as in other community matters. In many communities the superintendent of schools was one of the most visible leadership figures. . . .
>
> Under these conditions executives conducted the business of their districts with firmness and direction. Problems in a variety of areas were dealt with as they appeared. Unity of purpose, or at least lack of disagreement, within school systems and communities greatly reduced the time required for both planning and implementing projects.[2]

But the tremendous optimism that was evident in the late 1950s as regards the power of rational planning, and the feeling that school superintendents could indeed provide direction to school districts that would result in great progress and improvement soon came face-to-face with harsh realities. A whole series of events began to challenge the power of long-range, linear planning and, indeed, the traditional role of the superintendent and the school board. Emerging external societal, political, and technical forces have resulted in school districts being significantly controlled or influenced by organizations and agencies that had not previously played a major part in determining school district destinies. It follows that the role of the superintendent and school board became seriously constrained in terms of their ability to control school district events and activities directly. Yet school boards, as evidenced by our hypothetical recruiting brochure, still cling to the notion of the powerful superintendent who, working with the school board, can profoundly and directly influence the school district's program.

The following are some of the events and agencies that have gained increasing influence over determining the direction of school districts and, by so doing, have diminished or changed the influence of the superintendent and the board for determining local destinies:[3]

1. The civil rights movement. Beginning with the decision in *Brown* vs. *Board of Education of Topeka* (1954), and supported by numerous judicial rulings and legislation, a vast number of school district activities and prerogatives have been sharply curtailed. School districts must attend to the concerns of external agencies that have resulted in mandates on such matters as school desegregation, affirmative action, programs and facilities for students with special needs, students whose first language is not English, and so on.

2. International competition. In 1957, Sputnik shook America's confidence in its self-image as the all-powerful international force. Since that time there have been regularly recurring national reassessments of how various institutions, especially the school, are contributing to America's place in international competition. Numerous groups at the state and national level have enacted legislation and programs designed to improve the school's effectiveness, and these various initiatives have limited the districts' ability to develop their own curriculum and instructional program.

3. Collective bargaining. Paralleling similar movements in other public sectors, collective bargaining has become the dominant method for deciding numerous district policies and practices (for example, salaries, teacher transfers, teacher supervision, employee evaluation) that were previously decided unilaterally by school boards with, at most, only the advice of employee groups.

4. Special interest groups. Increasingly various advocate groups who felt their special interests were not being attended to by school boards (for example, special education, gifted children, poor children) have joined together in state and national organizations to effect legislation and court rulings that correct what they consider school district failings as regards their particular needs. (See chapter 9.) The result has been a myriad of categorical programs and much protective legislation that constrain and shape the freedom of the local school

board and the superintendent in decision making. (These and other problems and issues are addressed more fully in chapter 6.)

Our thesis is not that these several developments were unnecessary; nor do we suggest that the ability of schools to provide a quality education to all of their students has been necessarily compromised or limited severely by these developments. To the contrary, many of these developments resulted from accurate assessments of the unwillingness or inability of school boards and school administrators to respond to clearly emerging needs. And the resulting legislation and judicial actions have corrected or addressed serious problems. Nor is it our thesis that school superintendents and school boards are helpless to effect educational change and provide leadership to their districts.

Our thesis is, instead, that school superintendents and boards must develop in their districts those conditions and procedures that allow them to provide leadership within the present realities of external influences that constrain or limit their ability to exercise the kind of leadership that worked in the past. Often they must reconcile contradictions that have resulted from these various changes. For example, school district desegregation orders often have important implications for the placement of teachers in schools so that racial balance of the staff is achieved and so that the most experienced and trained teachers are distributed amongst all the schools. This laudable goal may conflict with teacher transfer policies that have been arrived at through collective bargaining and are designed to assure fairness and uniformity in teacher placement practices.

The increased pressure from external and internal agencies and groups has placed the school superintendent and board in a difficult dilemma. Often they must attend to demands that are externally mandated, and often they are sandwiched between external and internal demands that are not completely reconcilable. Indeed, in the 1960s, when initially faced with many external challenges to their authority, some superintendents simply avoided taking actions, insisting they were educators, not social engineers.[4] A good example, alluded to earlier, is the situation where externally determined orders pertaining to school desegregation may require changing teaching assignments that run counter to provisions contained in internally agreed upon employee contracts.

But another similar dilemma is that of reconciling two different schools of thought about how change should take place in schools. One school of thought reflected in some current studies and reports proposes "every tub on its own bottom,"[5] or more precisely the empowering of individual schools to identify and solve problems. A second school of thought, reflected in some current state reform programs, suggests that educational change should be accomplished by a system where commonly agreed upon innovations and practices are implemented through centralized state agencies.

In reality, neither the bottom-up, local school site approach to school innovation nor the centralized state mandated approach to school reform seems individually sufficient. Local school sites seldom have the time, expertise, or mandate to initiate school reform unilaterally. Indeed, one of the basic arguments used to justify the state-mandated approach is that local schools and districts have failed to identify and meet the widely known and deeply felt public dissatisfaction with the schools. On the other hand, the history of the success of externally mandated reform is not a particularly happy one. Time and again such reforms have either not been implemented or have been only superficially implemented, with little appreciable impact on school practice. (See chapter 4 for further discussion.)

We believe that these competing pressures, that is, internal/external and bottom up/top down, can be reconciled in many instances. In order to do so, however, school district superintendents and boards must change their role from that of directors and determiners of change to that of managers and brokers of change.[6] They must establish a culture of trust and a spirit of inquiry in the district that will allow the external mandates to be reshaped and accommodated to local needs whenever possible. We need "educational leadership politically adept at building pro-school coalitions, willing to abandon a narrow professional ideology, and skilled in creating coordinated programs in individual schools."[7]

Developing an Alternative Management System: A Sample District

It is reasonably easy to identify the dilemma that emerging conditions have placed on school districts. And it is not difficult to point out how the traditional way of managing school districts will likely not suffice to meet new realities. Clearly the "top down and bottom up" management approach just alluded to would seem to be a reasonable strategy for meeting this challenge. But saying it is easier than doing it! We know some districts that are continuing with traditional approaches, and in doing so are often floundering to meet new, irreconcilable demands within established structures. But, we also know some districts that are experimenting with different approaches and structures that are more consonant with these new realities.

In this section we will illustrate these newer approaches by presenting a brief description of how one school district has adjusted its functioning and structures in important ways. In doing so, it has become more responsive to external and internal demands, and more able to renew itself in response to changing environmental conditions.

When its new superintendent arrived, this district, which we will call Norton School District, was quite typical of many districts. Decisions were made essentially from the top down, and there was little consistency in implementing them. Staff morale was low, as was the level of trust at all levels, from the district office on down to the school sites. The district was torn by power struggles among various factions. There was little staff commitment to any larger district "vision."

Soon after his arrival, the superintendent initiated a series of workshops on team building and participative management. Both the district's management staff and school board attended these workshops, which were conducted by outside consultants. In addition, the administrative staff and school board completed numerous readings and held many intense discussions about a wide range of topics. As a result of these workshops, the board and management team developed a district management model that was specifically designed to meet the Norton School District needs. A keystone of this model provided that the district would grant to local school sites permission to assume increased responsibility for decisions about their own programs. Also, this model recognized the need for personnel at local schools to receive training and support so that they could carry out this new responsibility.

This fundamental change in approach necessitated the development, in turn, of a district management plan. The board and superintendent, along with the management team, agreed to develop jointly a widely agreed upon annual district plan, and the superintendent was given the responsibility to implement that plan. Indeed, the evaluation of the superintendent would be based on his success in doing so. Thus, the goals and expectations of the board, central administration, and the superintendent were clearly aligned.

At this point in the district's development, it became clear that much of the planning had been done by central administration and the school board. If they continued to dominate the planning process, without involving others, it was likely that local school sites would become alienated and resist change. Clearly, it was important for the superintendent to begin to develop a different, closer, relationship with the school sites than had been the case with his predecessor. Two crucial steps were then taken.

First, the superintendent began visiting each of the schools regularly. He met often with school staffs and listened to their perceptions of their problems, programs, and plans. These meetings provided him with an important "reality test" which maximized the likelihood that the district's management plan would be developed in response to the needs of local school sites, instead of attending to problems that had been developed in a district "vacuum."

Simultaneously, the school principals were formed into collegial triads of three principals each, which brought together for the first time elementary and secondary principals in the same setting to talk about common problems, discuss workable solutions, and visit each other's schools. The superintendent in turn visited each school in a triad with the other two collegial team members until each school in the triad had been visited. This provided the principals and the superintendent with unique insights into how the schools were being administered, and site administrators were encouraged to share their problems and their insights about schools and administration. Representatives from these collegial groups met in turn with the superintendent and his staff in order that a joint school district and school site perspective could be developed. Put another way, the district's problem statements were developed largely from the bottom up, thus assuring that the top administrators were aware of and working on the problems that the school sites felt were most critical. Further, the solutions fashioned for these problems were more likely to be workable because those affected by them were involved in the formation of solutions from the very beginning.

At this point, with a management system agreed upon and implemented, and the local school site problems identified, the district turned to more immediate instructional and programmatic matters. Another series of workshops was held, and this time the board members and district management and school site staff, including teachers, were engaged in discussions about topics that were more directly related to the educational program, such as teachers' decision making in instructional matters, cooperative learning, mastery learning, and cognitive development. Several instructional and curricular changes resulted from these meetings, including common understandings about what constituted effective instruction.

Another important outcome of those workshops was the development of two model schools. These sites were designated unique schools, where the district could try out innovative instructional approaches, and where new and experienced teachers could explore effective teaching techniques and, if necessary, upgrade their teaching skills. In each model school about one-third of the teachers formed a permanent core, and two-thirds were visiting teachers from the district schools who were there on two-year temporary assignment. A cadre of teacher leaders, who were trained in these model schools, eventually returned to their home schools and formed a vital instructional leadership core.

These teacher leaders and others at the school sites were involved in yet another series of workshops on "quality circles," in which the local school staffs learned to work together in common purpose to identify and solve local problems. As a result, the district's individual schools began to develop sophisticated problem-solving capacities. Today, each school site and, indeed, many of the other district offices, such as the business office and educational office, have "renewal councils" that serve to identify problems and forge solutions, much in the style of quality circles. Thus, through these processes, each school has developed outstanding teacher leaders and a commonly understood system for problem solving.

At this time, the school superintendent and board began to go beyond the district's boundaries and work with others who were interested in renewal. The district joined a partnership of several school districts and county offices and community colleges that had been formed with the Graduate School of Education of the University of California at Los Angeles. One major Partnership activity helped the Norton School District reexamine and improve its instructional program and curriculum. The district was also involved in a partnership-related activity that brought school district teachers and administrators together to explore cooperative learning as an instructional strategy. The district joined other organizations and networks, such as the Getty Art Institute, and thus maximized the staff's exposure to activities and developments in other districts and elsewhere.

The most recent district development has been to move the focus of concern to the personal level. Recent workshops and discussions have centered on how individual personalities can differ in important ways and how those personality differences can influence district and school site functioning. The implications of these differences for the school district are being assessed.

The result of all these activities has been dramatic. Morale has improved remarkably. By training leaders at all levels and in all schools, the district has much greater capacity not only to respond to external challenges, but also to identify problems in advance, and to forge solutions to those problems cooperatively. Staff members at all levels, who previously were isolated from one another, now know each other better and trust each other. The problems at the school sites are readily known to the board and superintendent. Fragmentation has been minimized. Finally, and perhaps foremost, the district has a sense of shared purpose and widespread problem-solving capacity that can be brought to bear on pressing problems. The district can now truly be described as a renewing organization. (See chapter 4.)

Identifying Commonalities

The preceding description illustrates how one district changed its management structure and functioning in order to reconcile the pressures from the outside with those from within and renew itself. This description is meant only to be illustrative; it is not an exact model of what other districts should do. Indeed, we know of other districts that have attended to this problem in other ways, following different timelines, using other activities, and following different sequences. But there are some "generic" commonalities found in our sample district's approach that we think will be included in most districts that move in this direction. It is to these that we now turn.

First, we briefly describe each generic activity and then illustrate its practice in the sample district. The four "generic" activities are: developing relevant staff skills, improving staff relationships, developing organizational goals, and assuring staff commitment to identified organizational goals.

1. Developing relevant staff skills. Any attempt to decentralize decision making or to increase local school site responsibility for its school activities and program must carry with it a concomitant district commitment to provide the local school site with the knowledge and skills necessary to accomplish the delegated responsibility. School staffs typically do not have extensive experience in group decision making.[8] Unless they are helped to develop this skill, and given the time to practice it, their decision making is likely to be ineffective and

this opportunity for involvement will diminish as the staff becomes tired of "wasting its time in endless meetings doing what the principal should be doing." We saw evidence of ways in which our case district provided for the necessary skill development. The school board members, district administrators, school principals, and staff were given numerous opportunities to learn group decision-making skills, including training in "quality circle" approaches. Similarly, they were given considerable in-service training in programmatic and instructional topics, such as teachers' decision making in instruction, cooperative learning, cognitive development, and finally, in personality assessment; and they were given time and opportunities to utilize these skills in solving real problems.

2. Building closer staff relationships. The loose coupling of schools has been widely commented upon.[9] School staff members within schools and other district offices often are isolated from one another, and their demanding schedules allow little time for them to get to know each other or to work cooperatively on common problems.[10] This results in a limited organizational capacity to identify and solve problems, and a level of distrust that ultimately impedes the district's progress. We found many instances in our sample district of attempts made to build closer personal working relationships. First, all the parties to the school district enterprise were included in the renewal process, including the school board, central administrators, site administrators, and classroom teachers. They all attended the workshops and had many opportunities to interact. Secondly, the superintendent and collegial principal teams often visited each other's schools in order to learn about each other's programs and problems. Networks were established that required teachers and administrators and school board members to work together over extensive periods of time. As those networks flourished, and as people became better acquainted both personally and professionally, the level of trust and understanding in the district increased. Finally, the level of communication and networking included not only school district staff, but also consultants and educators from outside the district. This involvement served to enrich the district with ideas and approaches that might not have occurred to the staff without this external stimulation.

3. Developing organizational goals. Some might refer to this as developing the district's "vision." Whatever it is called, it means that the district must develop a sense of its mission if it hopes to make

progress. Without such a sense of mission, districts react in uncoordinated ways to the many initiatives and challenges they face.[11] In our sample district, this occurred in three areas. First, administrators and teachers developed a common understanding about the management system, which included a commitment to decentralize much decision making to the local school site level. Second, they developed a belief system about children and the ways they learn and their ultimate potential. Third, they developed a curriculum and instructional program that allowed local school site initiatives so long as such initiatives were consistent with the agreed upon school district "vision."

4. Assuring organizational commitment. Writing annual goal statements is probably one of the most common activities in which school districts engage, and one that probably has the least impact on the day-to-day functioning of most districts. District goal statements, regardless of how beautifully written and bound, seem often to be destined to gather dust, or remain unacknowledged by most of the district staff, especially classroom teachers. There probably are many reasons for this (for example, they are developed top-down without involvement of those who will be affected by the goals, they are written in too vague a format, or they are too numerous to be carried out within the school curriculum and the time limits placed on the schools.

In our sample district, numerous steps were taken to maximize the staff's commitment to goals. For example, the school superintendent visited the schools with other principals in order to get a first-hand view of what was going on. This assured that the superintendent was well aware of the problems in the school sites and he, accordingly, made sure that the school board's policies and priorities were consonant with the needs at the local school site level. The "quality circles" approach to decision making is designed to assure that those who are most knowledgeable about the problem are deeply involved in determining a workable solution to the problem. Indeed, many of the basic changes and innovations in the district derived from activities (workshops, conferences, task forces) that included staff members from all levels and school board members. This management by consensus maximizes the likelihood that there will be deep and sustained commitment to the decisions reached, the programs initiated, and the goals aspired to.

Conclusion

We have argued that the superintendent and school board can still provide effective leadership, but the nature of that leadership must change to meet new realities. Leadership now must be directed at developing a school district that is capable of responding to external forces and that can seek out internal problems, identify them, and forge workable solutions. The superintendent's responsibility is to assure that the school district's leadership function is widely dispersed and shared. Districts that have achieved these management changes have greater potential for self-renewal.

We have identified four activities that comprise the superintendent and board's agenda in building a self-renewing school district: developing relevant skills that enable the staff at all levels, especially at the local school site, to engage productively in problem solving and program development; building interpersonal and staff relationships that enhance the building of trust and maximize communication among individuals and various subunits of the district; establishing widely agreed upon organizational goals that reflect the community's needs and the staff's beliefs; and developing staff commitment to the agreed upon organizational goals so that the goals are consciously part of the daily routines of all who work in the district, and are considered when the district staff, at whatever level, is confronted by new challenges.[12]

Our sample district illustrates how one district has implemented a new organizational structure and functioning that allows everyone to meet present day realities in school districts. It is, however, only a sample. Other districts will likely follow different scenarios. That is not important. What is important is that school districts seriously reconsider the traditional management structures that might have served them well in the past, but seem woefully inadequate now. The ecology of school districts has changed in important ways; this change provides school boards and superintendents an opportunity to exert innovational leadership in the district.

In our opinion, the shifts in school district organization and functioning that are described in our sample district, and from which we have identified commonalities, reflect more than just an expression of one more management scheme that can be considered as an interesting alternative to the more centrally mandated school reform packages that have emerged increasingly from state legislatures. For reasons elaborated upon below, we believe the currently popular centralized approach will be remembered by future educational historians as a flawed educational reform strategy. We also believe that historians will conclude that this centralized approach ultimately failed; and we believe a more decentralized strategy that embodies some of the features we have discussed will prove far more workable and effective.

There are several reasons why the centralized approach will likely fail. First, this approach is often in conflict with its own avowed purposes. For example, school reformers are constantly lamenting the absence of a sufficient number of talented, bright, and creative people who are choosing teaching as a career. Yet, the result of many of the state-mandated reforms is increasingly to reduce the classroom teacher's control over the curriculum, the instructional processes, the measures of educational outcomes, and educational funding. This continued limiting of the teachers' and administrators' degrees of freedom, however well intended, will likely reduce the attractiveness of education as a career to creative people. Ultimately, the self-defeating nature of state-mandated reform will become increasingly evident.

Another reason why this centralized approach is not likely to endure is that it simply is not compatible with the traditional culture and practices of American schooling. Ours is a decentralized, loosely coupled arrangement that does not lend itself to centralization. While the present, loosely knit system has its flaws, and some of them are substantial, nonetheless it is not likely that it will transform into a more centralized system now or in the near or even distant future. Complex organizations simply do not undergo such fundamental rearrangements unless there is a clear and present danger to their continued existence or there is compelling evidence that the new approach is better. Neither situation now prevails.

Finally, the centralized approach is not likely to work simply because state mandated and designed systems cannot, in spite of heroic planning and designing, begin to meet the enormous diversity found among our school systems. Procedures that would seem appropriate in one setting simply are insufficient or, worse, damaging in another setting. Selected broad policy guidelines are needed and useful, but specific, detailed directives governing the training of teachers and administrators, the teaching of subjects, and the governance and administration of local school sites—all of which are so much a part of current reform efforts—cannot begin to encompass the complexity of the system. The result is that practitioners often simply ignore the directives, or spend considerable valuable time and resources figuring out how to make a bad practice work in their situation, or have the appearance of working.[13]

The prototype we have presented in our sample district and the characteristics of it that we subsequently discussed represent, in our opinion, a far more workable strategy for school improvement. By providing school district and school site educators an opportunity to engage in identifying the school district's vision, and in determining the means of achieving that vision, teachers and administrators will more likely feel a sense of ownership over their activities. Put another way, they are empowered to take responsibility for their teaching and the education of their students. While it might be necessary for the state to set broad guidelines, and to insist upon accountability for the school district's activities and programs, this decentralized approach will more likely encourage creative and thoughtful people to enter the education profession. Also, this approach is more compatible with the present structure of schooling and therefore more likely to be realized. Finally, it affords local school districts and school sites the opportunity to fashion solutions to local problems.

But, most of all, it allows for the creative solution to complex problems in a way that generates enthusiasm and deep commitment. And in the long run, creativity, enthusiasm, and deep commitment are the elements of significant and lasting school reform.

FOOTNOTES

1. Nancy J. Pitner and Rodney T. Ogawa, "Organization Leadership: The Case of the School Superintendent," *Educational Administration Quarterly* 17 (Spring 1981): 45-65.

2. Fritz Hess, "Evolution in Practice," *Educational Administration Quarterly* 19 (Summer 1983): 224-25. See also, Keith Goldhammer, "Roles of the American School Superintendent," in *Educational Administration: The Developing Decades*, ed. Luvern L. Cunningham, Walter G. Hack, and Raphael O. Nystrand (Berkeley, Calif.: McCutchan Publishing Corp., 1977), pp. 148, 150-51.

3. Hess, "Evolution in Practice," pp. 225-42. See also, David Tyack and Elisabeth Hansot, *Managers of Virtue: Public School Leadership in America 1820-1980* (New York: Basic Books, 1982), Part III.

4. Tyack and Hansot, *Managers of Virtue*, p. 226.

5. John I. Goodlad, *A Place Called School* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1984).

6. There is some difference of opinion whether the superintendent or the board has the determining role in establishing the district's educational policy. See William Boyd, "Who Governs?" in *Politics, Power, and Policy: The Governing of Local School Districts*, ed. Lawrence Iannaccone and Frank W. Lutz (Columbus, Ohio: Charles Merrill, 1970).

7. Tyack and Hansot, *Managers of Virtue*, p. 252.

8. For an interesting discussion of this phenomenon, and the results of efforts taken to improve the decision-making capacity in several elementary schools, see Mary M. Bentzen and Associates, *Changing Schools: The Magic Feather Principle* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1974).

9. Karl E. Weick, "Educational Organizations as Loosely Coupled Systems," *Administrative Service Quarterly* 21 (1976): 1-19.

10. Dan C. Lortie, *Schoolteacher* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975).

11. Seymour Sarason, *The Culture of the School and the Problem of Change* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1971, rev. ed., 1982).

12. The approach suggested in our model district and in the "generic" activities harkens back to some of the basic tenets of Barnard's classic *The Functions of the Executive*. Barnard argued in 1938 that effective executives exert real leadership when they see to it that the organization's central moral purpose is clearly defined, widely shared, and consistently enforced. The executive does not control people; instead he assures that leadership is widely shared by all who are in positions of control. However, the leader retains responsibility to see that leadership is indeed exercised in accord with the organization's expressed moral purpose. Chester I. Barnard, *The Functions of the Executive* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1938).

13. For a review of the problems of California's state-mandated educational reforms, see Larry Cuban, "School Reform by Remote Control: SB 813 in California," *Phi Delta Kappan* 66 (November 1984): 213-15. See also, Paul Hareston, "Seize the Reins of School Reform, and Stop Those Runaway State Mandates," *American School Board Journal* 173 (April 1986): 51.

CHAPTER VIII

Seeing Clearly: The School as the Unit of Change

JOHN HENSHAW, CAROL WILSON,
AND JOHN MOREFIELD

> Efforts at improvement must encompass the school as a system of interacting parts, each affecting the others. . . . Schools will improve slowly, if at all, if reforms are thrust upon them. Rather, the approach having most promise, in my judgment, is one that will seek to cultivate the capacity of schools to deal with their own problems, to become largely self-renewing.
>
> John I. Goodlad
> *A Place Called School*

Self-renewal naturally involves looking honestly at what is. For schools this means encouraging those of us comprising the school community to examine not only our own immediate environs, be they the physics classroom or the principal's office, but also the interactive effect of each setting upon the entire school community. Through such activity we gain a clearer understanding of our present identity as well as our potential for change.

Engaging in such a process requires us to play the dual roles of teacher and learner and of expert and inquirer in order to seek out and use the ideas and skills that will support and enrich our efforts. Using a transdisciplinary approach to expand our search from the field of education to other areas of endeavor, we can greatly enhance our repertoire of metaphors and paradigms for conducting self-description and self-examination.

In this chapter we draw upon a variety of concepts and disciplines in our attempt to present a larger sense of school renewal. We do not provide linear, sequential directions for change. Rather, the ideas develop as a consequence of our various perspectives as teacher, principal, and assistant superintendent. The models we describe appear more neatly packaged than they are in real life, but they are intended to help establish a vantage point for viewing the personal, intricate nature of change and, therefore, the need to focus at a more personally significant level for pursuing change. In our analysis we relate notions about the school as a vital, open community and our dual roles as causers of and reactors to change. Additionally, we describe the value of transdisciplinary lessons, with the classroom and interaction between student and teacher as subunits of school-based change. A final theme encompasses the school's need to experience equilibrium, dissonance, resiliency—often all at one time—and what we call the nexus for change.

We have supplied examples in order to make the broad concepts more real. It is likely, however, that readers can provide more meaningful examples from their own experiences. We hope that this chapter will provide the stimulus for readers to view their own situations differently and more clearly.

The School as an Open Community

The peculiar institution of schooling today requires thinking from a plurality of perspectives. Many administrators, for example, tend to regard the school in terms of its formal structure of current institutional behaviors. Their decision-making context might be compared, as McIntyre has suggested, to the way a "businessman evaluates business propositions."[1] Teachers concentrate on their interactions with students in the self-contained classroom and in their content specialties, which in elementary schools are largely the skills programs they follow assiduously. The context of decision making for teachers chiefly derives from the currents of daily interaction with children, from formal contacts with other decision-making adults in a hierarchic manner,[2] and perhaps even more from the traditions they sense from having lived within a particular school structure over a length of time.[3]

Researchers of all aspects of education have compiled stores of intriguing but often disconnected information, which, if left ignored, benefit few. Textbook publishers print what the market will bear; students make whatever meaning they can from their learning environments; parents sometimes substitute school for the self-sufficient village of olden times; the captains of industry complain that character traits that make graduating students employable are missing or unreliable, and so on. Whether or not unanimity of opinion is even desirable in American public schooling, the point is that the fragmented nature of the discussion on schooling reveals the fragmented nature of educational practices reflected in our notions of how to improve schools. Even so, schools persist as entities and communities in their own right and deal as best they can with this conflict of vested interests.

The primary ground rule for constructive change in a school is that it become an open community, aware of its need to be itself educable through the development of new competencies and modes of thinking among all its members. There is a catch to the rule, of course, in that the key for unlocking sustained improvement lies in the capacity of the entire school community for change.

Several projects are illustrative. In one high school, a school-within-a-school project for potential dropouts was conceived by a counselor. The principal encouraged further discussion, a number of interested teachers were enlisted, a programmatic approach was developed with great enthusiasm and commitment, but the program folded. In another high school, a district-level mandate for instituting programs for the gifted was taken on by a single interested teacher with a flair for interdisciplinary studies. Armed with official commitments and a budget as large as any academic department in the school, groups of interested teachers developed instructional units extending the regular curriculum for gifted students in their mainstream classrooms, and a special interdisciplinary seminar was established. Students remembered the program fondly for years after graduation; yet the program as a coherent entity in the school came to a standstill after three or four years.

Both of these school-based projects were well-researched by participating teachers and were initiated at a grass-roots level. Principals endorsed them, staff development opportunities were provided, involved students responded favorably, involved teachers worked hard. But neither program gained the momentum for acceptance throughout the school in which it was introduced. A polarization developed between the innovative programs and the traditional school programs, not only with teachers, but with students as well. Neither program became a real part of what nearly everyone regarded as the "regular" school.

A phenomenon described by Fullan may have been at fault: "The more committed an individual is to the specific form of change, the less effective he or she will be in getting others to implement it."[4] He further explains that the more an individual believes in a particular concept, the more he or she is likely to assume that others also believe in it, and that they therefore do not require further explanation or understanding. And while what Fullan states may have been a critical factor, the deeper problem was that neither of these school-based initiatives was grounded on an understanding of change processes and on a clear vision of how the total school worked to maintain its equilibrium.

What we want to address are the ways by which change in schools is too often regarded in terms of either-or themes, cause and effect relationships, and myopic compartments of thinking about what knowledge means to others, such as students or our own colleagues. Like many others in education, we have often felt we knew enough to be left safely and solely in charge of schools, yet not enough, generally, to be inclined toward thorough, ongoing, authentic reforms.

The Development of Equilibrium

Dwellers in a communal village, school people (children and adults) habitually reinforce one another to fit the shapes that have been formed over the years and are often prized by the inhabitants. They create a shared portrait of themselves. As Lightfoot points out, this is as true for troubled schools as it is for good ones.[5] The dwellers often come to see this self-portrait not only as quite accurate but also as something to be preserved. They institutionalize the status quo. Persons outside the school wishing to change it see themselves as having to wage a struggle against inertia on the inside.

The idea, though, that school people resist change may be a bogus one. Rather, it is in their nature to desire that change proposals bear a family resemblance to what they know, can express, and understand best. Schools and the people in them constitute distinctive cultures and each culture requires a self-sustaining sense of balance, of equilibrium. New knowledge and methods may enter these cultures, but setting the conditions for interpreting them, developing the skills to use them, finding and then judging their values, and assuming responsibilities for the consequences of applying them are all cultural prerogatives of school people. A new technology, or even a new body of knowledge, is not likely by its mere interjection into a school to reconstitute the long-term enterprise to which school people have set themselves.

Thus, an important basis for school improvement has to do with sensing the enduring equilibrium and balance of the individual school. Ideally, the conduct and renewal of that equilibrium is what school people often need to reveal when confronting a challenge to change, whether it is initiated from within or from outside the school.

Now, a basic question must be raised. How does a school, as an educable entity, respond to the challenges of change while maintaining its equilibrium, that is, while continuing to exhibit a characteristic, reconcilable, satisfaction-sharing culture? Can schools do this genuinely?

Goodlad, among others, has pointed out that many schools claim to have accomplished reforms or most of the goals of nationally recognized educational programs but have not done so. The historical evidence gloomily suggests that only innovative ideas and practices that do not bend the school's existing regularities too far have the greatest probability of acceptance.[6]

We suspect there are at least two ways of accounting for the apparent conflict between demands for change and equilibrium. One way is fairly easy to grant; the other is more difficult to see. Let us try the easier explanation first by giving another example from our experiences with attempted school reform.

The superintendent of a fairly large suburban school district initiated a series of mandates for rallying district schools around a common vision of education based on mastery-learning ideas. The system that emerged, called outcome-based education, made its own encompassing demands. Central office staff grew by leaps and bounds to provide specialists to work with teams of teachers throughout the district in order to develop behavioral objectives, minimal competency standards, and methods for evaluation of student progress. A number of formal staff development programs were developed for faculties in various buildings in order to foster understanding of mastery-learning procedures and skill at implementing them in the classrooms. A computer-managed instructional system was conceived on the central administration level, at first as a means for handling the huge volume of information entailed by testing, and, eventually, it was hoped, for assisting in managing scope and sequence of instructional units.

The program developed slowly over a few years, gained its greatest success in the elementary schools (as seen by the number of teachers conforming to the prescribed practices), won the affection of most building principals as a way to manage schools through goal-setting and blueprints for three- to five-year plans, crept gradually through the schools, ultimately seeking compliance in the high schools. It seemed that a way had been found to establish the equilibrium of a school district while allowing for individual differences (chiefly in the time required to accept the new system) in the separate schools. Surveys and interviews at the high schools, however, began to reveal serious problems with the attempt to install a massive, systemic change.

Teachers raised questions about the value of stressing minimal sorts of learning outcomes, about the practicality of spending so much time preparing and administering tests, about reducing the process of learning and productive thinking to a set of narrow behavioral objectives, and about the problem of balancing task-oriented methods of instruction with relationship-oriented cooperative methods. A disheartening theory began to form among teachers that the schools were becoming rigid bureaucracies, that a remote system of decision making was replacing the collegial network favored by students and teachers, and that procedural techniques of management were replacing imaginative teaching techniques.

The system was defended by the administration, which felt that it would only be a matter of time before it would be used in every building. Meanwhile, very little of the specified program was at work in the high schools although nearly all teachers were willing to admit they had learned something from the exercise. What they learned, however, varied widely and, as a whole, showed little promise of amounting to the program as originally conceived. With a change in district administration, the top-down form of initiating and managing innovation, through designated administrative leaders in individual schools, lost momentum. Had the program continued, it simply would have been subverted by passive resistance and indifference on the part of many teachers and students.

The easy explanation mentioned earlier for the breakdown in this attempt is that setting remote and abstract goals, calling for school people to implement them as prescribed, is more likely to lead to dismay and resentment than to beneficial results. This is all the more the case if the demand presses people into role-divided camps, each reluctant to hear the other. Much is already known about this explanation. Charters and Pellegrin, for example, have described how mandated changes revolving around abstract outcomes can quickly lead to frustration and abandonment of projects.[7] House has pointed out that the diffusion of innovation requires extensive personal contact, allowing for "full-fledged information exchange and full exercise of personal and social influence."[8] Elliot argues that the role theoretical understanding can play in learning that involves new knowledge is probably most effective after a certain level of practical knowledge has been developed.[9] Shipman has emphasized the importance of concentrating on what teachers are actually doing in a school improvement project rather than adamantly insisting on the development of a specific concept of school organization.[10] Caught up in the sweep of logically appealing plans for school improvement, educators can easily lose track of what is truly vital about the activity, namely, the involvement people have with one another in developing, using, and modifying the plans and goals. Such involvement warrants the more complicated explanation of how to balance demands for both change and equilibrium in a school.

The complication arises out of a discrepancy between the actual and the intended results of the reform. Many of the participants in the reform attempt described above thought there were two different accounts of presumably the same experiences. The institutional or formal account of what people were supposed to be doing included countless written program plans, lesson plans, and, in a number of schools, detailed testing in which the scores were used to see how well all involved were doing their jobs. The second was the tradition-building or informal account of the actual events that most of the participants were experiencing with respect to the intended innovations. The latter account also included narratives of the usual experiences of life spent together every day among many individuals. We refer to this account as the "guiding text."

In the normal course of events, the guiding text of a school would arise out of the complex interactions among its members' knowledge, needs, beliefs, skills, and attitudes. The guiding text would tend to express all of the actions undertaken as solutions to past problems (the "crystallized behaviors," as Miel has called them[11]) and would provide the approach to problems in the present. The proposed innovations in our example, however, were to be substitutes for this guiding text. A conflict of competing narratives ensued, producing a subtle but effective backlash.

Had the backlash continued unchecked by a new strategy for school improvement, the schools of the district might well have resisted further proposals for change and would have lost any benefit from the awareness thus far gained about the interconnections, ambiguity, and legitimacy of change. A new strategy was developed, highly attuned to the sources of integrity and equilibrium in the schools. The sources are the abilities or perceptual tools of those in individual schools. The new strategy assumed that the onus of conducting change would rest on those abilities.

A Dual Responsibility: Shaping and Reacting to Change through Critical Inquiry

The abilities or perceptual tools of those in the school were brought into play through the process of critical inquiry and subsequent evolutionary planning in the school. Critical inquiry requires awareness of the realities in the school, rigorous discourse, reflection, analysis, cooperative planning, and the like. (See chapter 3.) It rejects the notion of pat answers and formula approaches to improvement. It may begin either as a coordinated or as an uncoordinated effort, with various configurations of staff and perhaps students pursuing particular concerns or interests, or a core of faculty addressing the central issue of the purpose of the school.

In the situation mentioned above, the major effort began with several new central office administrators meeting with teachers and the principal for ongoing dialogue over much of that school year. Because the history of the district revealed predominantly top-down, authoritarian decision making, the situation required repeated assurances from the district administration that there was no ulterior motive, no "hidden agenda" on the part of central office, that the district level administration did, indeed, support improvement efforts designed by the school staff. It was agreed that the central office role was to provide resources and encouragement, act as the communication link to the school board, and respond to the school's specific requests for assistance.

Beginning the following year, a teacher was released from classroom duties for a two-year period to work with the rest of the staff. His task was to stimulate inquiry, encourage dialogue, facilitate communication, in short, to facilitate the establishment of conditions necessary for change. This included focusing the attention of staff on their actual activities and their attitudes about schooling, learning and teaching; improving communication channels in the school and facilitating means by which more people could cooperate in different ways; and developing ways in which teachers could collaborate in recognizing and dealing with common problems and decision making.

An underlying assumption was that by taking time (the school year) to do all of this carefully, a more integrated, schoolwide approach to meeting the diverse needs of all students could be developed. An additional assumption was that since students and educators collaborate to make learning possible and valuable, and since thinking about and applying knowledge is as important as accumulating it, educators ought to improve their own skills in higher-level thinking and cooperative learning. The classroom could be a microcosm of what should happen in the school.

In order to accomplish all of this and extend the teaching/learning purpose of the classroom, the following activities developed:

- Regular meetings of a widely representative group of volunteer staff members for the purpose of discussing and acting on common issues in the school.
- Schoolwide surveys and studies, including individual interviews with teachers and administrators, a survey of student perceptions in the school, a survey of the faculty on what constitutes an effective school.
- Problem solving on immediate issues ranging from improved registration procedures to an improved student-advisor program.
- Staff-wide brainstorming and discussion of potential school goals resulting in a school vision statement and school goals which reflect the staff's beliefs about education and the district's commitments to the school.
- Support and encouragement for teachers to develop mini-grant proposals and for staff participation in major workshops and conferences such as those of I/D/E/A and the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. Teachers often prepared and presented workshops for others in the school based on their learnings in these activities.
- Support and encouragement for peer coaching and other staff development endeavors within the school.
- Documentation of the entire process as it unfolded and the sharing of it with the entire school staff, as well as district and state department administrators.

Clearly, the new approach endorsed the school's teachers and administrators as educators capable of conducting the kind of inquiry that would lead to planning and carrying out effective educational practices.

Everyone was a potential change agent involved in shaping the change and reacting to it. The role of the teacher facilitator perhaps was recognized more formally as that of change agent, and to this role fell the task of encouraging others to play the dual roles of expert and inquirer, of teacher and learner. Enactments of the dual role could be seen in the classroom in interactions between student and teacher, and in the school as a whole in the interactions of all members of the school community. Again, the focus was upon the reality of the classroom, enriched by the multitude and diversity of classrooms which combined to create the mosaic of the school culture.

The Transdisciplinary Viewpoint

Still, there are no sure-fire formulas for guiding the conduct of all those in schools who would wish to serve as change agents. For many of us in schools, our viewpoints are thoroughly immersed in the setting and self-absorbed. We have learned to find our ways around in the system. The school is a clearly etched place. We most often expect change proposals to be as custom-cut as a concept that we can attain by simply being handed a shoe horn to step into the shoes of the idea. We sometimes forget that to learn the concepts of our various disciplines, we had to find a way to reconstruct the field so that it made sense to us, even though the field at first seemed alien and exotic. Otherwise, we faced alienation from the field.[12]

Most of us, then, would have a hard time believing that the formal, official text of the school, while more pleasing on grounds of simplicity and symmetry, is likely the least mature text, and that the highly intricate, idiosyncratic, and informal text of the school is quite probably the more sophisticated. The informal text of the school is informed by many fields of knowledge. This thought brings us to another perceptual tool that is useful in seeing schools as the units of change and especially useful in balancing requirements for maintaining equilibrium with challenges for change. We call this tool transdisciplinary thinking.

Simply stated, school people, whether deliberately or unknowingly, build decision-guiding metaphors based on various knowledge fields. Application of these metaphors, concepts, and models is what we refer to as transdisciplinary thinking. A transdisciplinary viewpoint frees us from trying to reduce various disciplines and their diverse methods of problem solving to only one in our attempts to understand how schools as social systems hold together and cope with change. A transdisciplinary viewpoint might enable us, for example, to borrow as a metaphor an idea or two from evolutionary biology in order to help build a theory of change that could be applied to our schools.

Let us imagine for a moment that a school is a highly individual, unique ecosystem, a self-conserving organism (see chapter 1), and that as an organism it has already responded in a variety of ways to any number of environmental challenges to its survival. We do not have to presume that one school or another is ranked at a lower level of evolutionary development or scheduled for early extinction, owing to natural selection of one response over another. Rather, we might suppose that the human ability to communicate allows us to consider one of the roles of natural selection explained by Stephen Jay Gould in his discussion of Darwin's work.[13]

In evolutionary theory, the role of integrating functional changes into structural continuity, under normal circumstances, has for its classical example the slow, incremental development of a structure that eventually becomes what we would call a wing (say, on an insect or reptile). The initial function of the "incipient wing" may have been to aid respiration or to regulate internal body temperature. The function is favored while the structure of the organism remains the same (that is, that of a preflight creature). When the function changes (good grief, I can fly!), the structural organization of the organism continues to adapt, support, and elaborate on the possibilities of the new function. An inconspicuous little trick that a wriggling thing can do to warm up becomes eventually a new chapter in the life of a species. And so with the human history of change; an apparent steady state of a series of incremental adjustments is occasionally punctuated by the closing or opening of an era and its paradigms.

Applying this notion to schools, the chapter of reform had seemed closed in the district discussed earlier that sought an outcome-based educational program. Part of the different strategy brought in by several chief administrators new to the district entailed appreciating the stand-off that had been reached as an opportunity. The teachers at the high schools, for instance, were frustrated and ready to express their concerns about the innovations attempted. They came out of their classrooms and showed a willingness to leave their doors open in exchange for being accepted as participants in a two-way dialogue for school betterment.

Teachers and administrators discovered that they could draw upon the resources of their species. The functional change—open communication among all the adults of each school—was at first limited to discussion about curriculum development. Eventually, and perhaps inevitably, the discussion picked up the deeper issue of decision making in seeking to fashion integrated, schoolwide programs (good grief, we can fly!)

As a result of the creative discussion in that particular district on the subject of change, a rule for transdisciplinary thinking has emerged. We like to think of the rule as requiring "a zest for ambiguity unquenched by certainty."

Jacob Bronowski might have described this rule for science as "a constant maverick process of breaking out at the ends of the system and opening it up again and then hastily closing it after you've done your piece of work. . . . They take the closed system, they manipulate it, and then they find something which had not been put into the system so far."[14] Zeleny and Pierre describe the ambiguity rule this way: "The dynamic order of human systems organization is maintained through a continuous renewal of certain nonequilibrium conditions. Both nonequilibrium and instability are essential for self-organization of higher complexity."[15]

This rule of using conflict as a catalyst for change rejects attempts at educational reform that are limited to predesigned changes to be followed by implementation. Such a rule underscores the futility of "installing an innovation." It involves either introducing or identifying dissonance or discrepancy in an otherwise seemingly adequate flow of events. It also involves thinking more about instigating conditions for change on the part of more school people and less on justifying the status quo.

The resiliency of a school following a period of absorbing dissonance might provide a measure of the school's capacity for creative problem solving and self-renewal, while resultant planning might amount to reconstructing the same system again. Whether the school's resiliency was strong or weak would depend on the degree to which alternative narratives were encouraged. The more narratives, the more viewpoints are known. The more viewpoints known, the more comprehensive the understanding of school people trying to manage change.

Resiliency, for example, was strong in the case of a large urban elementary school faced with acknowledging that, like all the other schools of the city, a large discrepancy existed in achievement between black and white students. Research had made clear that race was a greater determining factor in performance on the California Achievement Test than socioeconomic factors. Breaking the news to a dedicated, hard-working, talented staff that they were somehow part of the problem was not easy for the school's new principal. There was a crisis situation throughout the city and in the school itself. The reaction of the staff was thoroughly defensive and disbelieving. The principal insisted on a formal dialogue and, despite whatever might be causes of the problem, on seeking solutions together.

The school bubbled for a week, at the end of which the staff unanimously agreed that dialogue must continue. As a group, they fashioned a plan of action: further data-gathering, identification of patterns and trends, formulation of strategies to manage trends better and to increase student achievement, and then further data-gathering. The school was becoming known to itself. New viewpoints arose promising to enhance the business of teaching and learning. A dissonance could be perceived as an opportunity for change to a universally recognizable better state. The unrestricted ability of the staff to create and examine alternative narratives of the situation was required in order to learn about the problem and to solve it. The school people proved to be members of an open community and educable.[16]

Resiliency and Nexus for Change

The ability of a school to exhibit strong resilience is enhanced by the ability of school people to

1. Emphasize and value the teaching/learning dialogue in their discussions that comprise the formal and informal structures of the school;
2. Act collaboratively from a transdisciplinary viewpoint, cutting across compartmentalized vested interests, seeking new syntheses for the meaning of knowledge from various frames of reference;
3. Reassess and redefine, voluntarily and periodically, the elements, features, and functions that comprise the current equilibrium state of the school.

In an organizational sense, a transdisciplinary viewpoint for the entire school is perhaps the most difficult to develop. It cannot be carried by only one or a few of the viewpoints a school formally has to offer, for example, needs of teachers, administrators, the community, or even students. Rather, it is a perspective arguing that no single one of the many eyes of a school is sufficient for viewing change likely to lead to a satisfying reconstruction of some established, regular pattern of behavior known throughout the school. The transdisciplinary viewpoint insists that the "consciousness" of a school pursuing meaningful changes resides at a point where all the authorities making demands on a school can meet. We call this point a nexus of authority. The urban elementary school and the high school described earlier are probably good examples of schools where the staffs found a nexus at least momentarily.

Figure 1 is a visual conceptualization of how demands from various sources of authority can intersect to form a nexus. A committee of school people having the responsibility of managing the demands of such a nexus could be an asset for any school.

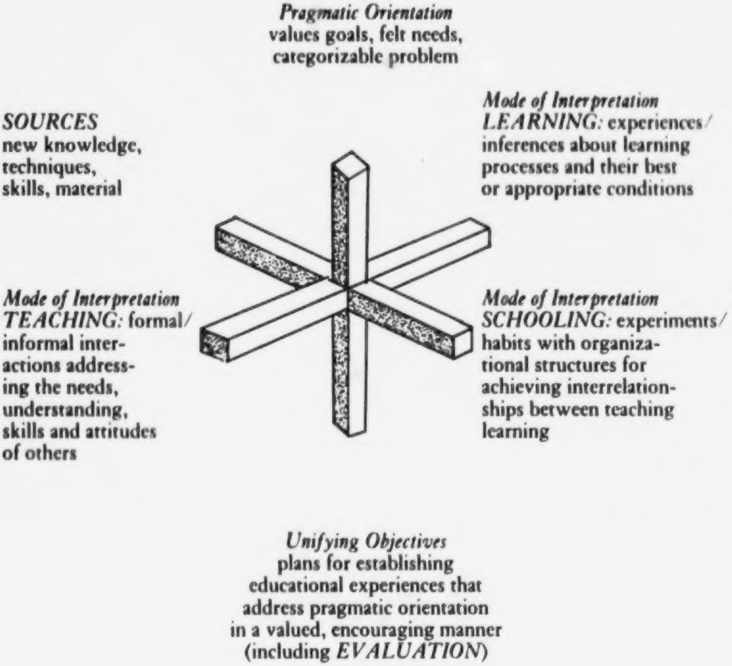
Pragmatic Orientation
values goals, felt needs,
categorizable problem
SOURCES
new knowledge,
techniques,
skills, material
Mode of Interpretation
LEARNING: experiences/
inferences about learning
processes and their best
or appropriate conditions
Mode of Interpretation
TEACHING: formal/
informal interactions addressing the needs,
understanding,
skills and attitudes
of others
Mode of Interpretation
SCHOOLING: experiments/
habits with organizational structures for
achieving interrelationships between teaching
learning
Unifying Objectives
plans for establishing
educational experiences that
address pragmatic orientation
in a valued, encouraging manner
(including *EVALUATION*)

Fig. 1. How demands from various sources intersect to form a nexus

One thing to keep in mind about this model is that it is based on the individual school. The goals, for example, running down the center of the figure do not simply start off from a governing agency (like the school board or state board of education). That is, the goals—whatever their origin—wind up consisting of what our understanding, commitments, and perceptions make of them in the actual school setting. The sources, too, may originate outside the immediate school community. For example, they may come from a consultant who advises the school or from a parent group. Yet, once again, they are sources recognized as valid because they meet in the nexus of concerns.

The unifying objectives, as suggested in the figure, reflect a plan that draws together the different bases of authority by which we continuously interpret what we are about as a unique, esteemable school. Evaluation might best be regarded as three-fold, though generally we are evaluating whenever we are checking out the relationships between our ideas and assumptions about actual situations occurring in the school. After Ralph Tyler,[17] we might note that evaluation may occur profitably at three points:

1. *Early on:* Examining the experiences which suggest how a given idea, goal, or solution to a problem may or may not be effective (outside sources may be especially helpful here).

2. *As we engage a given idea, goal, solution:* Here we are comparing the critical ingredients of our plan (as we imagine it) with the conditions under which the plan is actually occurring or not occurring; we do this on an ongoing basis.

3. *In sum:* Did our plan have the consequences with students we hoped for? Should we try again, differently? What is in the nexus for us to think about?

Like all models, the one we have suggested is presented in tidier fashion than it deserves to be. Probably any model would suggest that stability is a feature of a school undergoing change. This is misleading for a person to believe while undergoing the processes, senses of loss,[18] and experiences of actual change. Models also suggest that a preordained procedure is possible for any school undertaking sincere reform. This is an unnecessary "mystification," to borrow a term from Maxine Greene.[19] Rather, the case is more often like the high school of our earlier example, where the faculty groups, already familiar with various educational models, constantly refigured them and, finally, developed ones more suitable for their particular circumstances. Teachers teaching teachers in a variety of settings made abstract ideas multidimensional and multiserviceable again.

A necessary point to make, though, about models generally (including ours) is that the ability to redefine, voluntarily and periodically, the current state of the school is interrelated with the ability of school people to share their perceptions of the school as a whole. The test of a good model might well be that it provides a point of departure that can be used while cognitive reschematization takes place that will mesh in the workaday, shared world.

Yet, the ability to redefine the enterprises of a school involves more than just being able to re-narrate the fluxing environment of the school as it exists for a brief, real moment. The potential agents of change in a school are students, administrators, teachers, parents, and other interested parties. These agents must enter into a teaching/learning dialogue addressing the nexus of concerns for the school. They are, in fact, agents for change when they are able to share the experiences and to promote the ingredients of change that must include:

1. Ambivalence (facing issues challenging our already consolidated skills and knowledge);
2. Deconstruction (analyzing the prevailing assumptions and orders of hegemony in teaching and learning, and linking the two in an organized social setting);
3. Interpretation (reassembling the ways we express concern for the emerging intelligence of children; reconstructing a community for education, rather than developing a mechanism for schooling);
4. Commitment (taking action on the basis of a wide-ranging understanding of various ideologies, including those of children); and,
5. Confirmation (appraising what we have made—the consequences—of our sense of responsibility; educating and becoming educable by the wider adult communities linked with the individual school).

That the ability to redefine and reconstruct a community is personal and individual, transcending the one-dimensionality of only-organizational man, was portrayed some time ago by Anthony Wallace in his discussion of revitalization movements. He introduced the idea of "mazeways" as a way to understand problem-oriented, crisis-motivated cultural changes in terms of individual experiences at such times. "The mazeway," he says, "is nature, society, culture, personality, and body image as seen by one person. . . . Changing the mazeway involves changing the total Gestalt of his image of self, society, and culture, of nature and body, and of ways of action. . . . The effort to work a change in mazeway and 'real' system together so as to permit more effective stress reduction (in undergoing a 'period of cultural distortion' between one steady state and the next) is the effort at revitalization."[20]

All of us concerned with the school as the realistic basis and unit for change must become ready to witness those changes in ourselves as individuals, as members of a treasured group, as authors of a society just emerging. To commence and pursue such an undertaking is to begin to see clearly.

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CHAPTER IX

The School-Community Interface: Strategies of Community Involvement

RICHARD L. ANDREWS

During the early days of education in this country, there was a close link among home, school, and neighborhood. There was little difference between the structure of schools and the structure of families. Families often provided lodging for teachers, and schooling was viewed as a total community activity. Parents accepted teachers' professional judgments and rarely questioned the role of the teacher as the education "expert." The school was an extension of the values and characteristics of a relatively small, white, middle-class, contiguous, homogeneous community. The neighborhood school served as the backyard for the transmission of a set of normative American values.

Schools today are part of large bureaucratic organizations; there are rather clearly defined boundaries between school and community, and teachers are rarely in the homes of students. The structure of the community has changed from simple and hierarchical to complex and multifaceted. Segments of the community not only are disengaged from schools, but often are adversarial in their relationships with them. There are conflicting values and differing expectations for schools among the various community groups. The cornerstone of the educational system, the neighborhood school, all too faithful to principles of bureaucratic organization, has fostered formalization of roles, division of labor, specialization of tasks, and clearly delineated boundaries between school and community.

Educators are perceived as wishing to prevent involvement of parents and the community. Professionalism has emerged as a code word for keeping parents at arm's length, for resisting the development of any meaningful face-to-face contact between school and parent and between teacher and community.[1] School people react cautiously to inquiries about performance of students, teachers,

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schools, or the school system, thus inhibiting the development of personal relationships with the broad spectrum of the community served by the school system.

These conditions have contributed to a widening gap between the schools and the communities they serve and to an increasing concern for the cost as well as the quality of education that children are receiving. To reduce this gap, many parents prefer not to defer traditional educational decisions to teachers and wish to extend their role beyond passive activities to a partnership role both in what their children are learning and how they are learning.[2] Rather than deferring educational policy decisions to professional educators, leaders in business, government, and the community have a renewed interest in education because of its perceived link to the economy and the general health of cities, counties, and other geographic areas.

The trend from indirect to more direct parent and community involvement in the schools has renewed interest in the decentralization of educational authority from the school district to the school site, a move to increase the bonding between schools and the communities they serve. The interest in school-site management has not been received with equal enthusiasm in all segments of the community. School-site management is perceived by many minority parents and leaders, particularly in the black community, as another means to assure control of schools by white parents, and once again decrease the power of minorities to control the education of poor and minority children.

There are other factors as well that seem to account for the current drive for increased direct citizen involvement in education. Many parents are better educated than in the past. Young parents today grew up in a time of turmoil and challenge to authority. Many of these parents believe that battling over turf is fundamental to establishing appropriate role relationships. Citizen participation is strong in all aspects of society, and the school is the most accessible institution for most people. There has been a general decline in public trust in elected public officials due to years of publicity about decision making designed to promote special interests. A shrinking school-age population has thrust municipal governments and school officials into conflict over the closure of schools.[3] School desegregation is perceived as adversarial to the preservation of the neighborhood school and homogeneity of its population. Poor and ethnic minority group parents and community leaders have become more aggressive in pursuit of quality education for their children.

Educators in school systems often view parents and the community as hostile to their efforts. They believe that the less information the community has about its schools and the less involvement of the community in the affairs of education, the better. Educators persist in blaming parents for the poor performance of students in schools and believe that if most children lived in a traditional nuclear family, all would be well in American education. These views have become translated into a set of role expectations for educators, parents, and the community.

Educators expect parents to provide the appropriate cognitive and attitudinal foundation to prepare children for the professional schooling to be provided by trained educators. As children progress through the schooling system, parents are to monitor homework and show support and enthusiasm for the activities of the school by attending after-school programs, athletic contests, and fund-raising activities. White, middle-class, two-parent households are perceived as well prepared for this role and as willing to provide the necessary support; low-income, single, and minority parents are perceived as poorly prepared for this role and/or unwilling to provide the home/school support necessary for achievement of their children.

Educators expect the community to provide the necessary financial resources and a continual supply of relatively homogeneous students to be educated. Communities that do so are perceived as positive, healthy places to teach. Rural America once served as the model community. With the population shift from rural to urban areas, suburbia became the exemplary community. The core city, on the other hand, is viewed as a political battleground of conflicting values, special interests, and ethnic minority groups, unstable in both its ability to support schools financially and to supply the necessary population of students.

While such views of schools and communities prevail, there is growing sentiment that if schools are to serve the students who will be adults in the twenty-first century, we must change our rational and bureaucratic view of schools to an ecological perspective and create new bonds between schools, families, and neighborhoods. The ecological perspective is based on the following premises: (a) educational systems are part of the larger system; (b) educational decisions are, therefore, at the same time ecological decisions; (c) ad hoc solutions may "solve" what appears to be a problem in one small part of the system, but they usually cause costly pathologies in many other parts of the system; (d) pathologies in schools, then, are systemic-ecological. Solutions cannot be viewed as simplistic and ad hoc, but must be viewed as designed to deal with complex ecosystem problems.[4] Rather than viewing the environment as hostile, which requires school people to create shells around the schools to protect them, the ecological viewpoint embraces an open, interdependent view in which school boundaries are positive bonds between schools and the communities they serve.

In this chapter I discuss the resource-dependent nature of schools and the demographic, economic, and political changes that have important implications for the operation of schools. Two examples of a school system gaining or losing legitimacy are then presented, using the ecological perspective as an analytical framework.

Conceptual Framework

Previous views of schools or school systems have assumed that structural arrangements within schools or school systems are tools designed for the efficient achievement of a set of educational goals. In this view of schools as rational systems, considerable emphasis is placed on maintaining control through the use of bureaucratic processes. Decision making tends to be centralized. The power of the schools, then, resides in the structure of the school system, not in individual schools or their principals, teachers, and students, and not in the interdependencies of exchange between parents and community groups and school administrators, teachers, and students.

The image of the school as an ecosystem entails considerably different assumptions. The ecosystem view stresses complexity and variability of the individual component parts—individuals and subgroups—as well as the looseness of connections among them. The system, rather than having only one head (top-down), has many heads ready to receive information, make decisions, and direct performance. Subgroups within school systems are fluid. The boundaries of the school or school system are seen as amorphous; designation of people to be involved or the relationship of their actions to the school or the environment often seems arbitrary and varies depending on what aspect of the school or school system is under consideration.

Two distinct lines of inquiry regarding the improvement of schools are possible in the ecological system perspective: (a) the exchange relationship between schools and their environments, and (b) the internal nature of schools as related to change. Since the focus here is on strategies of involvement for purposes of improvement, the line of inquiry is the former—the exchange relationships between schools and their environments.

The environment of schools and school systems is composed of those agencies or forces that affect the performance of the school or school system over which they have little or no direct control.[5] But the school or school system can develop strategies for positive exchange relationships.[6] Schools and school systems are seen from a resource dependency point of view. Resource dependency stresses processes of adaptation to environmental circumstances. School officials or dominant coalitions scan the environment for opportunities and threats, formulate responses, and adjust the structure of the school or school district accordingly. The boundaries of the schools are like sieves, not shells, admitting the environmental influences perceived as positive and excluding influences perceived as negative.[7]

To generate financial and human resources from the community, the school system must be perceived as legitimate. Legitimacy of the school system means that it is capable of adapting to its community while at the same time retaining its ability to be adaptable. To do so, it must neutralize community constraints and mobilize community resources. Neutralization of community constraints (laws, rules, and regulations, pressure group interests) and the mobilization of resources (bridges that result in contracts, mergers, associations, or institutional linkages) provide the basis for determining the level of operational resources and freedom for decision making. The more unlimited the resources, and the more unencumbered the decision making, the more legitimacy the school system enjoys within its community.[8]

Legitimacy, as defined here, is also related to the enhancement of school programs. Thompson suggested that organizations (schools), seek to seal off their technical core (classroom activities) from community influences.[9] The strategies that schools use include the use of educational jargon, making all classrooms look alike, increasing the size of schools, increasing school budgets, and telling parents they are not in the mainstream of thought about what should be done. Under conditions of plentiful resources, these strategies appear to have worked fairly well. However, under conditions of diminishing resources, these strategies tend not to be available or have little usefulness. Under conditions of declining resources, schools must turn to bridging strategies designed to increase their interdependence with the community or selected parts of the community—such strategies as bargaining, contracting, joint ventures, mergers, associations, and institutional linkages that focus on increasing and/or enhancing existing resources and relationships.

This shift in the paradigm for viewing schools has implications for how we conceptualize change. Change means nothing more than "the alteration of one state to another."[10] The way we choose to look at schools has implications for the processes by which schools become altered and how we conceptualize change itself. If we conceptualize change solely as changing schools, we only consider the structural dimensions of change. As such, we follow a line of investigation that is more consistent with the rational view of schools. We focus on the structural dimensions, on changing schools. If we view change as improvement in schools, rather than solely changing schools, four dimensions emerge: individual, groups, schools or school systems, and the school-community interface.[11] Alterations, then, can be internal or external, planned or unplanned. As internal and planned, the focus is on the individual and group, and is most reflected in the school improvement literature. Those who have studied change from the planned internal perspective have made suggestions for new organizational forms that are designed to improve individual attitudes and satisfaction. They suggest important implications for top-down versus bottom-up change, and effects of change on effort, performance, or satisfaction of principals, teachers, and students.[12]

The second type of change, which has been assumed to be external and unplanned and described as adaptation, is of equal or even greater importance than change defined as internal and planned. This second form of change concerns the modification of the school system or its individual schools to fit or to be adjusted to its community.[13] Of importance, then, is both form (schools) and context (community). Successful architects have long understood the importance of form and context issues in the design of new buildings. Form (the building) must fit context (environment) if an aesthetically pleasing result is to be achieved. The fit between schools and communities deserves no less of our attention.

Three concepts are of particular importance to form and context: openness, boundary spanning, and organizational health.

Opening up the System

For a school system to be an effective organization, it must be dependent on community feedback for internal adjustments to changing conditions, which enables the school system to recognize the change and to adjust as necessary. Recognition of this internal and external uncertainty requires the ability to gather information from the community, process the information, and then provide appropriate information back to the community.

To be effective, school district communication with its community must include a system of routine, purposive information acquisition, and techniques for scanning the relevant environment in order to keep abreast of issues that may contribute to increasing the distance between the schools and their communities.

The key to the communication network between the school system and its community is the concept of openness. Openness is the degree to which a school system has linkages with its community. Within this framework, individuals who have the least information or association with schools—rather than close friends of the schools—account for much of the change-related information that is needed by school systems.

One of the fundamental problems for school systems is that when individuals or groups are pressing for changes or when there are less resources to operate the schools, the degree of openness of the school system to its community tends to be reduced. This reduction is logical since communication across the boundaries between schools and their communities is inherently difficult under stable conditions. The increase in threat only acccentuates these difficulties.

Research on school districts attempting to close schools, implement desegregation plans, or make their schools more effective for poor and minority students, suggests that the most effective school districts are those which, under these emotion-laden conditions, increase openness by implementing unique strategies for the involvement of parent and community groups.

People with Feet in Two Camps

School systems establish linkages or mechanisms with their surrounding communities—be it individuals, other organizations, or social groups—in order to maintain their effectiveness. To do so, school systems must have individuals with "feet" in both the school system and the community infrastructure. These individuals are boundary spanners, the "sensory organs for their organizations."[14]

Boundary spanners provide "reports" of what is happening in the community, through which teachers and administrators acquire their understanding of "what's out there." These school boundary occupants have distinctive roles and characteristics that are qualitatively different from teachers and administrators who play roles strictly internal to the school system.[15]

Boundary spanners are susceptible to a high degree of role conflict. Coping with at least two different and perhaps contradictory sets of goals, values, and beliefs requires skill in compromise, conflict resolution, and flexibility. They must operate in situations where they do not have formal authority, and must use expertise or friendship as power. They must have finely honed verbal skills and represent norms of the school system to the community in a manner that does not offend or alienate power elites in the community. Boundary spanners' major job is to "decode the positions taken by other parties and then encode them into the customary verbal repertoire of constituents."[16]

Collecting and filtering information along with buffering the schools from their environments become paramount activities for boundary role occupants. While there are several models for viewing boundary spanners, Litwak and Meyer's contingency approach details an array of variables that may influence the effectiveness of linking mechanisms.[17] Among these are social distance between schools and primary groups; face-to-face communication versus mass media; brief versus extensive encounters; technical knowledge; and the people to be affected by the activity.

The Importance of Niche

Organizational health plays a central role in the stability and survival of public education. At any given time, schools have a "niche" to fill in their community. The niche, or need for and type of educational activities, changes due to internal health and external conditions faced by schools. When the niche is increasing and keeping the same shape (focus), schools flourish; when the niche decreases or changes shape, the schools experience crisis or decline.[18]

The decline in the health of organizations, in general, has been attributed to failures in foresight or inexcusable behavior on the part of administrators: inappropriate life-cycle responses, growth or shrinkage at the wrong time, poor coordination of activities, and upheavals in the external environment. Current theoretical perspectives, however, reflect the belief that decline results from the interaction of both internal and external factors, not from each operating separately. Decline in school systems may result from one or more of four possible school/community conditions: community entropy, school system atrophy, vulnerability, and loss of legitimacy. Community entropy exists when the community no longer has the capacity to operate schools. School system atrophy occurs when the school system has programs still in effect after the need for them has faded away. In effect, the school loses "muscle tone."[19]

The condition of increased vulnerability may result from a variety of circumstances—uncontrolled growth, lack of expertise, poor self-image, or decline in the sources of school revenue. Loss of legitimacy takes place when school systems experience a lack of sufficient budgetary resources or fail to cultivate political acceptance from constituencies affected by schools.

Through an interaction of environmentally induced niche variations occurring incrementally or radically, organizations must often adapt to declining conditions.[20] This aspect of decline is especially important in the public sector[21] and serves as the basis for our analysis here. Legitimacy, as a political perspective, is a relational construct derived from the school system's awareness of and nurturing of those constituencies or publics whose benefits or costs rest on the nature of students who finish their schooling experiences.

Political, Demographic, and Economic Conditions

Within every community and subcommunity there is a political framework constraining the decisions made by policymakers within that environment. This political framework, with its accompanying constraints, exists at the local, state, and federal levels, and affects all areas and levels of policy. Policy and fiscal decisions should be made with the intent to provide maximum benefit to all affected by these decisions. The reality of the situation, however, is that too often politically expedient decisions are made—decisions that reflect the wishes of the most powerful interest group. The group in power, however, is rarely a consistent one and political values shift quickly from conservative to liberal and back again. The net result is inconsistent policy and fiscal decisions: As both municipal governments and school districts experience a spiral of decline, these inconsistent decisions on policy and fiscal matters only serve to amplify the problems.

Demographic changes, economics, and politics are inseparable. A decline in the economic base of a geographic area (decrease in available funds) leads to inadequate services, to rising tax rates, to further economic decline. In school districts, the cycle is similar and closely related to the existing general economic conditions. A decline in population leads to neighborhood deterioration, to decline in property values, to further out-migration, to school closure, to a further decline in population, and so on. Our research suggests that once this cycle is started it may take as long as a decade for a positive trend to begin, even with vigorous intervention.[22]

The ecological view assumes an interdependency between these sectors. A school system without a strong tax base and without individuals who value education, will have fewer financial resources and little public support; a city without good schools may not be able to attract and hold the middle-class residents who revitalize the city and contribute to a strong tax base. The impact must be dealt with cooperatively by these two sectors. Joint decisions must be made regarding the allocation of scarce shared resources—decisions based on an in-depth analysis of the effectiveness and efficiency of programs and services, decisions made to maximize benefits.

Two Case Studies

Two case studies of school districts illustrate the interdependency of school systems with their communities. Each school district attempted to deal with a complex, emotional issue—school closures or school desegregation. These cases help illuminate the nature of the relationship between circumstances and strategy for the development and maintenance of legitimacy.

LACK OF CLOSURE

Narver provides an insightful look at the efforts of an urban school system to close elementary schools in response to declining student enrollment.[23] The school district, as described by the author, is fairly typical of the average urban school district. The district increased steadily in student enrollment over the years until 1960. In the following two decades, its enrollment steadily declined and the district experienced environmental turbulence due to an increasing ethnic minority population, increasing numbers of poor families migrating to the city, and a changing ratio of rich to poor, young to old, and parent to nonparent population. Unaccustomed to environmental scanning, the district was still planning and building new school facilities two years after the student population had already started to decline.

The school district first considered the closure of schools in 1972, and proposed the closure of seven schools in 1974. When the district proposed the closure of the seven schools, citizens successfully questioned the validity of the data used by the district in selecting which schools to close. Narver characterized the school district administration as unschooled in the politics of school closures and lacking the management skills necessary to negotiate successfully in a divisive arena of decline. On the other hand, citizens and community organizations had learned lessons in neighborhood-based politics of Model Cities and other community development programs, and were far more sophisticated politically than school administrators. City planning was directed toward preserving city neighborhoods and responding to citizen participation requirements. The mayor and the members of the city council joined the conflict on the side of the citizens and wrote a stinging report titled, "The City Responds . . . ." The school board, having ignored the broader issues in the closure decisions, quickly backed away from closing the seven schools.

The district decided to postpone any further closure decisions until studies were carried out. Despite a commitment to delay further closure decisions until these studies were completed, an abrupt decision was made by the school board to close five elementary schools in response to financial crisis. Community members from one of the school areas took the district to court. The community charged that schools were protected under the State Environmental Policy Act, were part of the ecology of the city, and that decisions to close schools required that an environmental impact statement be prepared before the decision. In August, 1976, a district court judge concurred with the community and ordered the five schools reopened.

Narver describes a complex series of efforts to close schools. In each effort, the district established criteria, determined a process, involved citizens, and held hearings. Once the process had been started, the school board changed course in midstream, approved different criteria, and proposed schools for closure; after considerable community pressure, and negative editorials in the local newspapers, the closure decision was deferred.

Narver effectively documents a school administration and school board inconsistent in decision making, out of touch with influential citizens, citizen groups, and other elected officials, confused by the power exerted by community groups, and constantly changing the strategy for arriving at decisions, with a resulting loss in legitimacy.

Analysis. The district lacked openness to its environment. Narver suggests that each time the district was faced with angry citizens, its response was to change the criteria for choosing schools. The district expressed surprise that the sentiment among citizen groups, the news media, and building-level teachers and principals was with the citizens who opposed school closures. The district's response to citizen concern was to hold formal hearings, at which citizens could sign up to "testify" before the board of education. Such formal mechanisms are illustrative of reduction of openness in the face of environmental threat. While the intent of the board may have been sincere, the structure of information exchange became formal and isolated.

The district lacked boundary spanners who were connected to the emerging neighborhood-based power structure. The district operated on the assumption that the old downtown unified power structure was the appropriate district linkage. The district had no connections with the emerging neighborhood-based power groups within the city. Further, the fact that the mayor and the city council members sided with citizens and in an official report were openly and severely critical of the district, suggesting that they operated in isolation of city concerns, needs, and plans, is indicative of lack of sensory organs that could translate for the district "what was out there."

WITHOUT A COURT ORDER

In *Without a Court Order*, Siqueland provides an exhaustive analysis of an urban school district's efforts to desegregate its schools and maintain local control.[24] The author recounts a history of school district decisions that led to the segregation of its schools, and of responses by the district, under previous administrators, to thwart efforts to desegregate its schools. The importance of this in-depth case history is that it represents a dramatic reversal of a school system from reducing openness and linkages under threat to an interdependency between the school system and its community, characterized by openness and effective linkages.

Responding to threats by the NAACP and the ACLU to file a lawsuit against the district if it did not desegregate its schools, in May, 1976, the school board set as a goal the integration of all schools and programs.

Accepting that the most inflammatory issue for school districts across the country was the desegregation of schools, and that court-ordered desegregation plans had caused community crises, the district decided to implement a community-based involvement process to generate a school desegregation plan. The process and plan as developed and implemented resulted in the implementation of a comprehensive mandatory school desegregation plan. The plan was implemented without parental boycotts, community disruption, or demonstrations and confrontations. The plan was developed collaboratively between the school district's planning office and a broad-based citizens' committee composed of fifty individuals. The cohesion and linkages that were developed, as noted by the author, were such that significant groups and the school district successfully defeated the implementation of a state-wide initiative designed to dismantle the desegregation plan through district and circuit courts and the U.S. Supreme Court. Siqueland concludes, "The legacy left to the city was a just, right, and equitable school desegregation plan."

Siqueland provides an insightful account of an information-search strategy on the part of business, community, education, administrative, and policymaking groups, which included reviews of research, communication with elected officials in other cities, in-depth analyses of twenty-nine desegregation cases in other cities, community surveys, information-gathering meetings, and strategy sessions by school district administrators, board members, city, state, and federal officials, and citizen advisory committee members. The district effectively established new structures for communicating with significant power groups, coined a language—fixed assignment, rather than mandatory busing—to keep the news media from using inflammatory words. Siqueland describes in great detail the creative, energetic, and in some cases charismatic and collaborative leadership of community leaders and school officials working in concert.

Analysis. The district established a clear set of criteria for the development of a desegregation plan. Unlike the school district in the school closures case, where the district unilaterally generated criteria that they changed to fit the situation, in this second case the broad-based citizens' committee developed a thirteen-point set of criteria and submitted it to the school district for approval. After the criteria were approved by the district, organizational representatives on the advisory committee sought and achieved endorsement of the criteria by their respective organizations. The criteria were developed from analyses of twenty-nine case studies of desegregation in other cities. As Siqueland notes, in submitting its criteria for approval the committee stated: "Let us, therefore, commit ourselves to the implementation of a desegregation plan which is right, just, and in the best interest of the students in the school district."[25]

The district had a large number of boundary spanners who had feet in the right camps. The committee (charged with developing a desegregation plan and recommending it to the district) had teachers, parents, administrators, and community members with a high level of credibility in their respective organizations as well as respect from the central administration in the school district. Parents who had long been active in school matters as well as citizens who had only passing acquaintance with the district and its schools were linked directly to each other and to the district. The majority of the members on the committee had connections with a strong neighborhood power structure. These individuals were able to interpret accurately what was "out there."

The district increased its level of openness to the community. As noted earlier in this chapter, the natural tendency of schools is to reduce openness in the face of environmental threat. The district not only did not reduce its openness; it increased it. In the school closure case the district held formal hearings; in the second case the district held a series of thirty open community meetings for community interaction, discussion, and debate. The district effectively used boundary spanners to find out "what was out there," found lack of consensus for school desegregation, and implemented an involvement strategy designed to build community consensus.

Concluding Comments

These cases help to illustrate the point that education's niche in a given community is not predetermined. Its size and shape are determined through activities or events initiated by the school system, the community, or sectors of both. The nature of the interdependency of schools and their environments suggests, however, that legitimacy is extremely important. Increasing legitimacy is the artful construction of form and context. Doing the right things at the right time is important to maintain the legitimacy of schools. Schools must avoid the natural tendency to reduce openness, have good scanning mechanisms in place, and have the right people with feet in the right camps. Failure to do so reduces organizational effectiveness, as was vividly displayed in Narver's enlightening analysis of the failure of the district to close schools. This district should have been able to sense that there was no community consensus for the closure of schools.

Siqueland's analysis of school desegregation, however, suggests that under severe threats, school districts can not only avoid reducing openness, but can increase it. The district became more open to the community and it utilized a wide variety of boundary spanners who had feet in the right power camps. The district implemented effective involvement strategies designed to develop linkages and consensus. It developed comprehensive information-search strategies before acting. It developed a defensible set of criteria for approving a desegregation plan, and consistently used those criteria. The adoption of the criteria allowed the district and individuals or groups with either strong or weak ties to the district to argue from definition of what was a good plan, rather than from circumstances such as "not enough money," "if we don't we will be sued," or "it is not what the community wants."

These case histories suggest—as does plain common sense—that organizations do interact with their environments and that they are dependent on their environments for a number of important resources, including the necessary information to provide corrective actions when threat or decline conditions are present. Further, it seems that when responding to conditions of decline and environmental turbulence, schools can maintain their legitimacy within their communities either by adopting what appear to be relatively low-risk and ultimately unproductive buffering strategies, with the attendant reduction in openness, or by adopting what might appear to be higher-risk bridging strategies. In one of the cases considered here, the school district and the organizations with which it interacted chose bridging strategies over buffering strategies to enhance legitimacy and effectiveness to implement a school desegregation plan. In the school closure case, much time and valuable resources were diverted toward legal posturing, conflict, and loss of legitimacy. In the school desegregation case, the school system was energized by additional resources.

The delineation of causes for the selection of one strategy over another has not been of concern here; however, in cases where resources were shared, the potential for long-term legitimacy of the organizations seems to have increased.

I suggested earlier that when schools are viewed from the ecological perspective, there are no simplistic answers or ad hoc solutions; rather, ecological problems are systemic. There are no cookbook answers to these kinds of problems.

There is, on the other hand, some guidance that may help school people make sound decisions. We know a number of things about communities from decades of research on community power structures. This knowledge, when combined with our concept of legitimacy, provides at least some guideposts. The first task is to shed rational notions of organization that conceive the environment as hostile, and open the boundaries between the schools and the communities they serve. Once this is achieved, we should look for yardmarkers to enlighten and provide some valid information for reports from boundary spanners. What is going on "out there" has ongoing implications for how to maximize resources and neutralize constraints.

The key to the new paradigm is defining the niche for education and legitimating the school system in the eyes of its community. As noted earlier, the school system must be perceived as legitimate; however, legitimacy is not a static state but a set of circumstances. There is a need for mechanisms that link schools to their communities and the structure of the school system to the structure of the community. The open-system perspective suggests that this is a dynamic and fluid relationship between schools and their environments; the processes needed vary from issue to issue and with the type of community.

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Part Three
MAXIMIZING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

CHAPTER X

Reporting and Using Educational Research: Conviction or Persuasion?

MARGRET BUCHMANN

When secular criticism was applied to religion, the foundations of faith were called into question. Instead of revealed truth, scholars found the scriptures to be human testimony, fallible and conflicting. Not knowing what to believe, many people were troubled. Some wondered what to say to people they wanted to convert. And Bible criticism opened the way to social science.[1] Now that scientific criticism is applied to science, similar problems arise. What is one to believe, as certainty seems wanting? What justification do researchers have for changing other people's minds?

If we want a better understanding and utilization of educational research in policy and practice, we must face these questions. Clearly, the question of what is knowable must precede the question of what is communicable or usable knowledge. In previous yearbooks of the National Society for the Study of Education, philosophers of education have considered how the critique of science affects the role of educators and the rationality of educational research.[2] In this chapter I consider the import of this critique for research

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communication. What can educational researchers say to practitioners, and what, as Dewey put it, are "the traits that mark off opinion and assent from authorized convictions?"[3] What rhetoric used in communication is appropriate to (educational) research as a form of knowing?[4]

Answers to these questions depend not only on characteristics of knowledge, but also on what one considers a defensible goal in research reporting. I shall argue that this goal is communicating authorized convictions, not misconceptions or persuasive bias. This educative goal fits with the aims of science and also with the aims of action—to the extent that acting presupposes knowing.

If the communication of authorized convictions is to be successful, the audience must come to know researcher claims as warranted. To communicate their authorized convictions, researchers must pay attention to the conditions under which people get a hearing and succeed at changing other people's minds. Yet little attention has been given to questions of what this goal may imply for rhetorical devices researchers may employ, or what constraints on the manner of writing—for instance, recognizing the rationality of the audience—apply to research reporting. These questions are analogous to questions philosophers ask in the context of teaching.[5]

If researcher claims are reasoned judgments, the reasons have to be transmitted along with the judgments. A no-frills transit system of conclusions or injunctions may be rapid, but it fails as communication of research. From this point of view, research writing is a problem of principle and practice and a specific variant of the traditional theory-practice problem in education. The written research report is an important but neglected place for considering it. Clearly, teaching a general audience is not the only goal of research writing, nor the most important one. If inquiry is to prosper, the primary allegiance of researchers must be to their intellectual communities. The success of social science, however, depends on achieving some public understanding.

In religion, there were three responses to the erosion of certainty. Confronted with secular criticism, some nineteenth-century clergymen turned away in silence. The foundations of faith being subject to doubt, they felt they had lost their authority. While the policy of silence equates failing to be absolutely certain with lacking all reasons for conviction, it also encourages the notion that all beliefs are of equal merit. In quelling or hiding their doubts and bringing others to accept received dogma, some members of the clergy endorsed a policy of assertion and persuasion. Respecting the evidence and the rationality of other people, still others revised and explained their beliefs, aiming to communicate their authorized convictions.

Analyzing these prototypical responses to the difficulties of knowing and believing in the context of research writing, I shall examine why the policy of silence is unwarranted, why the policy of assertion and persuasion is wrong, and why acting on the policy of explanation and conviction is not straightforward. In reporting educational research to general audiences, the question is how to walk the fine line between convincing explanation and mere persuasion.

On the Right to Be Sure and the Need to Trust

Research findings can best be interpreted by someone who sufficiently masters a body of work to be a good judge of what can fairly be made of it, or of how findings from different lines of inquiry may or may not be consistent; denying the value of researchers' ability to think over and communicate the meaning of their findings therefore makes no sense.[6] These considerations throw doubt on the notion of some scholars that practitioners should draw "their own" conclusions from research.[7]

The fact that most researchers have little practical expertise underscores the importance of conversations among researchers and practitioners. But such opportunities for interactive knowledge use will not be broadly available; hence we need to rely on the written report for communicating research. Still, research reports can be looked at as contributions to a historical conversation about education.

Philosophers and social scientists draw attention to conversation as an intellectual and ethical ideal for several reasons.[8] Generally inconclusive, conversations are not driven by the goal of winning but by the goal of understanding. They can clarify issues and differences. In form and content, conversations are less restrictive than arguments and more egalitarian. Their freedom and fairness can help people see things in a new light. In the social conversation about education, practice can have its own voice, which need not be assimilated to the voice of science nor requested to seek its guidance.

If we think of knowledge use in these terms, avoiding breakdowns in communication while ensuring the distinctive qualities of entries become crucial concerns. This implies that we need standards of intrinsic quality and appropriate communication in reporting educational research. These requirements relate to obligations attached to the researcher's role as scientist, and to the researcher's social role.

In research communication, moral and epistemological issues are intertwined and create special bonds among people.[9] The language of knowing is, in part, a language of authority, rights, and obligations. When one has a right to be sure, one is entitled to make assertions that others have a right to trust. Yet when they have no right to be sure, researchers making confident assertions are subject to blame. The question is, when are their convictions authorized?

THE NATURE OF AUTHORIZED CONVICTIONS

Authority need not be absolute; the concept of authority is consistent with gradations and qualifications. In convictions, the measure of authority is reasonableness. Reasonableness involves more than marshalling the facts. Where they are relevant and available, data constitute part of an array of good reasons, while concepts, norms, and the other (substantive and formal) characteristics of what people consider a good case account for the rest.

Indeterminacy affects authorized convictions in two ways. First, though they may seem legitimate at the time, convictions can turn out to be wrong; thus, they admit of doubt. Second, inferences depend on concepts and modes of reasoning people bring to a situation; they cannot simply be "read out" from the data. Usually, the evidence allows for more than one reasonable interpretation; thus, any given interpretation lacks definitiveness. Neither form of uncertainty necessitates relativism or obsessive hedging.

Although in "its honorable sense, knowledge is distinguished from opinion, guesswork, speculation, and mere tradition,"[10] scientific reasoning does *not* move by unfailing processes of inference from unassailable premises to conclusions that are proof against error. But researchers are able to determine things worth believing and doing by moving from adequately secure premises, with not so necessarily unfailing processes of reasoning, to warranted theoretical and practical conclusions. Put simply, we tend to make much of the evidence we have, and this is defensible as long as it is reasonable. Some educational researchers hold similar views; thus Fisher and his colleagues argue in their final report on the Beginning Teacher Evaluation Study (BTES) that

> one may reasonably base a belief on inconclusive evidence. No knowledge is ever absolute. Even experimental analyses are generally open to more than one reasonable interpretation, particularly when one wishes to generalize to natural situations and events. Correlative data combined with experiential

> knowledge and logical reasoning often provide considerable evidence for causal relationships. One should recognize the limitations of such evidence, but not disregard it.[11]

Nor does the possibility of error invalidate the idea of truth. For, "*It is altogether wrong to equate a tentative claim to truth with a claim to tentative truth.* They are every bit as different as a hesitant confession of wrongdoing differs from a confession of hesitant wrongdoing."[12]

Experience is ambiguous. In the arts and sciences, this fact translates into competing perspectives. Some critics interpret poems in relation to the artist's personal biography, others approach them as expressions of the universal voice of poetry. And biologists think very differently about what an organism is. Some look at it as many pairs of fixed and determinate cause-effect connections; others stress its unity, looking at the organism as a vastly complicated "feedback" mechanism. This variety is not a matter of personal taste and preference; "it reminds us only that different occasions or topics, subjects and contexts, may give us *good reasons* for adopting one standpoint rather than another."[13] Nor does being committed to a particular point of view exclude commitment to second-order standards of critical and reflective discussion; hence competing perspectives do not imply breakdowns in communication.[14]

The coexistence of defensible perspectives on a subject, which differ from one another on the related dimensions of substance (ways of conceiving subject matter) and form (ways of justifying conclusions), makes a profound difference for thought and action. It provides both grounds and substance for open-mindedness, as a mental and moral disposition.[15]

OPEN-MINDEDNESS AND CONFIDENCE

Open-mindedness is a moral disposition in that it is often easier to live and think by the beliefs that are close to oneself: in one's family, profession, or research community. Given different valid perspectives on a subject, one has reasons for occasionally suspending beliefs and subjecting them to further analysis. The systematic elaboration of perspectives gives people the wherewithal for a radical evaluation that allows seeing things with new clarity and freshness.

However, while researchers may feel cozy in the mode of eternal doubt or the divided mind, action cannot *remain* in these modes. One cannot, for instance, partly reject, partly accept another person's offer to buy one's car or forever—probably—accept the offer. People ask themselves, "What shall I do?" in response to some concrete, particular situation that will make circumstantial and pressing demands on their good sense and competence. All pertinent concerns will not be readily apparent, nor need their order be hierarchical or simple and fixed. And what is done is done; only the thought of it can be changed.

Hence, what matters is what the act is—what it is like, what it is for, what it changes or leaves as it is, and what comes of it for teachers and students. The acting person has to consider, furthermore, that the consequences of a given decision extend beyond its specific outcomes, "generalizing," as Scheffler put it, "into norm and precedent":

> For every decision inevitably reverberates outward, spills beyond the bounds of the problem, no matter how initially conceived. It creates precedents, activates analogies with the past, helps to form, strengthen or modify a general style, a set of norms that newly influence criteria of consistency in action.[16]

This leaves us in a difficult spot. While in the movement "outward," from thought to action, determinacy increases (directly and indirectly), the *in*determinacy of reasoned judgment increases as well, and gets more complicated in the process.

A way out of this quandary is to follow the maxim, "Resolve it first, and wonder about it afterwards." This serial approach allows, in its two parts, for the confidence necessary to act while honoring the requirement for second thoughts—which is essential because of the indeterminacy of practical judgment and the normative force of action and decision. The confidence that fits with both parts of the maxim is a mental attitude of trust, arising from reliance on oneself (including what one knows and wants), circumstance, and other people. As an expectation so assured, it is not unjustified. Neither is it overboldness or presumption based on insufficient or improper grounds, marked by that excess of assurance which precludes reflection.

"Wondering about things afterwards" can be informed by concerns for truth and rightness, a willingness to test and reconsider, to listen to others and to change one's mind. Thus the charge to entertain "second thoughts"[17] carried by the second part of the maxim reintroduces the very open-mindedness that its first part must suspend in the act of choice, which (temporarily) ignores the possibility of errors and alternatives. Open-mindedness justifies confidence.

CONFIDENCE UNDER COMPLEX CONDITIONS

Considering the issue of confidence in the context of interactions between researchers and practitioners adds another layer of complexity. For, the smaller the measure of knowledge on the part of an audience, the greater its need to trust, though confidence is no more justified by this need. At the very least, one needs to believe that the researcher is honestly and adequately talking about what she knows. And the smaller the measure of knowledge available to the audience *or* speaker, the more likely it is that confidence born of interaction will be based on improper grounds—having an engaging personality or looking distinguished—while to the eyes of colleagues a researcher may be less than competent. Nevertheless, what is logically unsound may interactionally be necessary, for "the efficacy of spoken communication rests in the end upon the transmission of nonverbal signs of credibility."[18]

This does not entail being suspicious. For, confidence being only in part grounded objectively does not require withholding it, or always questioning the validity of claims. There has to be some mutual reliance when people who differ by knowledge, concerns, and interests come together—in actuality or in postulating an audience in research writing. Indeed, the need to trust characterizes not only relations among researchers and practitioners, but applies quite broadly. While "in an ideal free society each person would have perfect access to the truth . . . in science, in art, religion, and justice . . . this is not practicable; each person can know directly very little of the truth and must trust others for the rest."[19] Once there is distrust, differences among people shade into suspicion and disregard, eroding the basis for communication.

The standard way of thinking about rational action is to consider possibilities and then to choose the one that seems best, acknowledging that the choice is made on imperfect information. If theoretical knowledge is indeterminate and action determinate, the resolution of this tension may be a partial reversal of this order; that is, confident action with the habit of going back to examine the adequacy of grounds for actions taken and of the normative space that they help us form. What this suggests for researchers is making confident recommendations, with the habit of going back to reflect on their reasonableness and the ways in which acting on them may ramify into norms and precedents. Typical reporting formats do not accomplish these things. Instead, they tend to foster the misconception that the adequacy of conclusions and recommendations is beyond question.

Research Reporting as Principled Practice

Any principled practice depends on a normative attitude. Respecting the uncertainty of knowledge and the rationality of other people in research writing presupposes a commitment to the development of reason, which many Anglo-American philosophers regard as the distinctive purpose of education. My case differs from arguments in that mainstream because I consider what is entailed in teaching an adult audience—in many ways already expert in education as their field—through research writing. This audience needs to know more about standards for judging the reasonableness of the researcher's claims. These writers need to examine which rhetoric fits with (educational) research as a form of knowing.

Looking at educational researchers as teacher-scholars aiming to communicate their authorized convictions is quite different from seeing them as the occasional authors of "capsule summaries" for practitioners or as writers of the standard "implications" sections. Writing in these modes, researchers often rely on their presumed authority to support their claims. But teaching requires that the audience come to believe things for good reasons.

This requirement has intellectual and moral bases. First, the difference between "truly believing" and "knowing" something is based on understanding the backing of claims in an intellectual community; second, in giving reasons, people acknowledge each other as responsible moral agents.[20] Here we could rest the defense on Kantian grounds: Denying this privilege to anyone is failing to respect people as persons, treating them instead as means to one's own ends—getting assent, instilling beliefs. However, we can link this argument to social and political goals of schooling. If we expect teachers to prepare children for participation in a democracy, we must not neglect any opportunity for demonstrating what treating other people as responsible moral agents means. Thus it is not only miseducative and immoral to substitute persuasive bias for good reasons in research reporting, but imprudent as well.

CONVICTION AND PERSUASION

In science and morals, people routinely appeal to considerations that should, in principle, be valid for all persons, rather than having mere private validity. Kant stresses this point in contrasting conviction and persuasion:

> If a judgment is valid for every rational being, then its ground is objectively sufficient, and it is termed a *conviction*. If, on the other hand, it has its ground in the particular character of the subject, it is termed a *persuasion*.
>
> Persuasion is a mere illusion, the ground of the judgment, which lies solely in the subject, being regarded as objective. Hence a judgment of this kind has only private validity—is only valid for the individual who judges. . . .

> Persuasion, accordingly, cannot be *subjectively* distinguished from conviction, that is, so long as the subject views its judgment simply as a phenomenon of its own mind. But if we inquire whether the grounds of our judgment, which are valid for us, produce the same effect on the reason of others as on our own, we have then the means . . . of detecting the merely private validity of the judgment. . . . Persuasion I may keep for myself, if it is agreeable to me; but I cannot, and ought not, to attempt to impose it as binding upon others.[21]

Conviction and persuasion differ as kinds of belief and ways of getting other people to believe things. The differences that count logically and morally presuppose knowing and caring about the choice of means used to gain the assent of an audience and, related to this, the comparative merits of reason and emotion in getting people to agree with one. It is, however, less the quality of feeling that is problematic than appeals to particular feelings, such as self-interest or fear, which put aside the claims of others and of reason.

Conviction is only a first step in the movement "outward," from thought to action, and not a necessary one at that. This is important from a pragmatic point of view: researchers can persuade teachers to act on recommendations without giving them good reasons. While conviction and persuasion differ, abstractly, the feeling of having a belief does not vary with kinds. Opinions and biases may be held as firmly as authorized convictions. All this goes some way toward explaining—not justifying—why people wanting others to act in certain ways may try to persuade, bypassing the aim of conviction.

Persuasion tends to work through "arguments that aren't arguments."[22] The mere repetition of claims, for instance, can induce belief. Consider the following figure of speech, the gist of many research reports in education:

> It is your mother whom you have struck.
> What more can be said?
> It is your mother whom you have struck![23]

Perhaps it looks more familiar in this example:

> Students do not spend enough time on academic tasks.
> What more can be said?
> Students do not spend enough time on academic tasks!

Or in this one:

> Teachers give too much attention to affect.
> What can we say?
> Teachers give too much attention to affect!

Repetition here adds to the feeling of significance and makes claims memorable; more importantly, it makes a judgment sound peremptory: suggesting that it should go without saying, that it admits of no refusal, question, or contradiction and, therefore, settles the matter. This seems more obvious and less controversial when the charge is striking one's mother, but the same rhetorical mechanisms, peremptory posture, and voice—the register drops to chest tones—operate in the other cases. They suppress assumptions and are accusations in the guise of scientific conclusions.

Persuasion aims to muster thought and feelings in closed ranks; it bends the *will* of other people, making tactical use of their needs and dispositions. Since it has to do more with causing things to happen than with imparting or revising knowledge, persuasion is closer to the performative than to the informative uses of language. People do not answer statements such as, "I urge you to do this," (for example, more time on task) or, "I warn you not to do that," (for example, not so much attention to affect) by saying, "You are lying."[24] They either do or do not do what they are told and understand that they are given orders.

Persuasion goes for results in matters of belief and action. To get people ready to act in certain ways, alternatives must be excluded. By its inherent purposes, persuasion eliminates the open-mindedness that justifies confidence. Open-mindedness is compatible with judging that some things are worth believing and doing, and more so than others. But mere persuasion puts the emphasis in research communications in the wrong place and fixes the attention of practitioners in the wrong direction. Persuasion due to inappropriate assumptions of moral and epistemological authority is a kind of betrayal, a grave violation of trust. A popular version of the persuasive denial of uncertainty is casting research conclusions as implications for practice.

THE MYTH OF IMPLICATIONS

Strictly speaking, nothing is implied in research findings beyond the questions that may be answered by the research and other *questions* to which the research is related by the intellectual and social traditions of research communities. Supposed implications from research for practice—as recommendations for action—are neither deducible nor logically contained in scientific propositions; they depend instead on moral frameworks and networks of power and authority that affect the work of practitioners, as well as on legal and political knowledge and (importantly) know-how.

When researchers cast conclusions as "implications for practice," they gain persuasive force by a terminological suggestion of cogency—a form of compulsion with logical and moral elements, capable of supplying a feeling of certainty. In this context of usage, the term implication is surrounded by "fringes," affectively charged expectations that account for its power to persuade. And, although practical imperatives are not culminations of scientific method and external data, or their highest development and consummation, their place in research reports and mode of presentation often suggest just that.[25]

While reasonable people may disagree, it seems that (logical) implications should be binding. Taking issue with what is comprised or involved by nature or meaning in a statement, as a necessary consequence, gives the impression of folly or capriciousness. Where one is sure of one's premises, logical conclusions appear to be not mere assertions or problematical statements, but absolutely demonstrable and incontrovertible.

Yet one can be sure (that is, convinced) of premises that are false; and one *can* take issue with logical consequences, since what is thus involved may well be false. (Falsehoods have logical consequences, some true, some false.) But the label "implications" may incline one to accept a proposal for action, because what is offered under this label may be mistaken as indefeasible. This terminology masks the moral complexity of decisions and the indeterminacy affecting the logic of intentions.

One can understand that people want to believe what they decide to do is the thing to do, definitely, and that it is based on solid as opposed to shifting and uncertain grounds. While there are many decisions which have no simple right choice, "implications" from research for practice have an air of authority. The rhetorical force of the term "implication" appeals to the needs and hopes of audiences. By contrast, explanations aim to give people reasons for believing or doing something.

THE RHETORIC OF EXPLANATION[26]

People try to add to other people's knowledge by dispelling ignorance and correcting error on the assumption that persuasion is unnecessary or inappropriate. The rhetoric of explanation as a pedagogy separate from persuasion is relatively recent; prior to Bacon, explanation as an *aim* of discourse was rarely mentioned.[27] While persuasion aims to sway beliefs, explanations are primarily a method for delivering knowledge. Their typical medium is writing, and their court of appeal is reason. As a pedagogy, explanation relies on the related strategies of exposition, amplification, and argument.

In ordinary language, the root meaning of explaining is opening up or unfolding. Unfolding a matter, one makes it plain and goes into its details. In explaining, people clear something from obscurity, state its import, show how it relates to things already known, and give an interpretation that accounts for some subject of interest, illuminating causes, origins, or reasons. Explanation makes things accessible and intelligible.

More fully exhibiting the meaning of terms and assertions, explanation corrects ambiguity and uncertainty of meaning by using distinctions and definitions. Distinction marks differences of sense in an ambiguous word to advance clarity and protect one's intended meaning. Definition sets out the meaning of a term or assertion and is particularly necessary when words or phrases are new, uncommon, or used in a specialized way.

Newman argues that explanatory amplification makes a good writer, one who sees the foundation of writing in thought and has the intellectual habits, power, and ingenuity to enlarge upon propositions so that the reader can understand. Including definition, he lists three other modes of explanatory amplification:

> By stating the proposition in different ways, at the same time shewing [sic] what limitations are designed to apply to it, and wherein there is danger of mistake, which it is necessary to guard against.
>
> . . . By stating particular cases, or individual instances, and thus shewing [sic] what is meant by a general proposition.
>
> By illustrations, especially by formal comparisons and historical allusions. What is familiar to our minds, is thus made to aid us in understanding what is less obvious and less easily discerned.[28]

Overall, explanation has generative and corrective purposes; it aims to engage the mind and aids the growth and change of understanding.

Explanation and argumentation are related, since removing ambiguity of terms and claims, clarifying errors and consequences, giving examples and drawing comparisons can be means or subordinate purposes in argumentation, or otherwise be helpful in the statement of reasons for or against a position and the discussion of a question. Conversely, explanation does rely on argumentative strategies, in the testing and sifting of claims, for instance. Yet to argue often means to reason in opposition, raise objections, contend, dispute, or examine controversially; we try to argue other people into, or out of, a line of action, belief, or intention.[29] While arguments and explanations need not be at cross purposes, they can be responses to different requests, "Prove it to me" and "Tell me more." Coherence as logical connectivity is central to arguments. But in their orientation toward the goal of understanding, explanations are compatible with narrative and conversational modes of discourse.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* notes that explanation has an accent of mutuality, for it can be "a mutual declaration of the sense of spoken words, motives of action, etc., with a view to adjust a misunderstanding and reconcile differences, hence a mutual understanding or reconciliation." Dewey describes how explanation in this sense can affect both parties:

> To be a recipient of a communication is to have an enlarged and changed experience. One shares in what another has thought and felt and in so far, meagerly or amply, has his own attitude modified. Nor is the one who communicates left unaffected. Try the experiment of communicating, with fullness and accuracy, some experience to another, especially if it be somewhat complicated, and you will find your own attitude toward your experience changing; otherwise you resort to expletives and ejaculations.[30]

The explanation of research affirms the ethos of science and exemplifies inquiry. It enacts the respect for truth, the self-respect of the researcher, and a concomitant respect for the person on the other side of this symbolic exchange.[31] The proper explanation of research, moreover, renders it discussible. Facts and ideas can be ventilated: exposed to public notice and consideration, a fresh and invigorating current of thoughts, and a free examination from different sides. This rhetoric is compatible with making the most of scientific knowledge, in a defensible way, and with bringing educational research and practice together to good purpose, namely, to educate. But how can researchers remain true to this goal without overexplaining? How can they avoid taking advantage of their presumed authority to impress audiences with personal beliefs, or appeal to them by their air of sincerity?

On Problems of Practice in Research Communication[32]

Researchers are judging, wanting persons with many firm and settled beliefs; and like most of us, they rarely take the world as they find it. Yet when Einstein developed the theory of relativity, he was not just fond of his opinions; when he spoke about world affairs, however, he probably was. The trouble with opinions is their entrenchment and crudeness: they are strongholds of belief at the same time that they are usually not thought through or worked out in detail. Ben Jonson put this clearly: "Opinion is a light, vain, crude, and imperfect thing, settled in the imagination, but never arriving at the understanding, there to gain the tincture of reason."[33] While personal opinions deserve respect, we have no reason for approaching the beliefs of scientists outside their domains with the respect due to their collective modes of knowing. Personal opinions need not be self-serving to endanger reasonableness. They can be dogmatic and ill-informed, romantic or parochial, and that will do plenty of damage.

In reading or listening to a research report, however, it is difficult to tell where the scientist proper stops and the judging, wanting person begins talking. Neither the page nor the speaker suddenly turns blue or pink by way of warning. Perhaps the most vexing difficulty is that, when educational researchers speak from their opinions on matters of practice and policy, the "voice of science" seems to become more plain—intelligible and candid—acquiring a straightforwardness it otherwise lacks. This is a pleasing illusion that researchers have every reason (though few incentives) to dispel.

These plainspoken opinions represent what is unscientific in researchers' minds: stipulative assumptions about people, education, and society, reflecting common sense or personal beliefs. They are spoken with the "voice of science" but without its legitimate authority.

THE REDUCTION OF EXPLANATION TO SINCERITY

How can "the voice of science" be distinguished from the personal opinions and beliefs of research? Especially in the social sciences, people try to address this problem by arguing for a general disclosure approach along the following lines:

> 1. Any piece of research, any course of study, implies both a selection of subject matter and a selection within the subject matter—a selection of theoretical method as well as a selection of relevant facts.
>
> 2. This selection will naturally be a function both of the interests and values of whoever is responsible for it and beyond him, to some greater or lesser extent, of the society or culture of which he is a member. One might add that a study whose subject matter was chosen entirely at random, that is, one which might be relevant to no particular interest or which was undertaken in the light of no particular value, need by the same token have no particular importance for anyone.

> 3. In order to eliminate any possibility of misunderstanding or of hidden persuasiveness, the [researcher] should start by making an explicit and unreserved declaration of his own values and interests in the subject.[34]

This approach will go some way toward assuring that the interests, biases, opinions, and personal beliefs of researchers do not remain tacit premises, with the result that their arguments "pass from bias and opinion in the premise to bias and opinion in the conclusion."[35] But the disclosure approach does not go far enough and cannot guard against misunderstanding and hidden persuasiveness; in fact, while secrecy is bad, sincerity may be a form of hypocrisy.

First, it is difficult to be explicit and unreserved, not only due to the likely conflict of honesty with interests, but because people's minds are psychologically and logically chaotic in a way that poses problems for any revelation that aims to communicate. Excessive honesty makes people contradict themselves. If it is difficult, often bewildering, to confess all, the next and more interesting question is, What would one get from a full confession?

In a provocative paper, Gouldner reinforces the first point, and goes straight to the heart of the second one.[36] The "ritual of frankness," as he calls it, is naive, since it assumes that we know the values we have. Beyond that, simple frankness suggests that one's values are good enough, which is smug, and assumes that having opened up to the knowledge of others and oneself "where one comes from" and "whose side one is on," one has done all that can be expected.

However, declaring values and interests can never clarify how *having* particular values and interests "affects the worth, scope, the bite, and the objectivity"[37] of a particular piece of educational research. And exposing the reasons of one's heart does not mean probing them. In this sense, disclosure is vapid—failing to produce any great effect on the understanding—and vacuous too, for it does not supply a context in which values and interests, with the consequences of having them, can be appraised by comparison and contrast.

Simple frankness about researcher interests and values is a reduction of explanation to sincerity. The ritual of frankness furthermore ignores the fact that not everyone's values and interests stand on a par in the world we have made. Why else should Nobel Laureates, for instance, be called upon to speak about matters of public concern, once they receive this prestigious scientific award?[38] And even less exalted researchers declaring their disciplinary affiliations—educational psychologists, sociologists, or anthropologists—are not just providing information that should help the audience to place and qualify their statements; by their declaration, they claim special knowledge and status. However, explaining things also has its pitfalls.

THE LIMITS OF EXPLANATION

The rhetoric of explanation is difficult to carry into effect. Yet research reporting is like writing of any kind in that it misses its point if it simply passes the audience by. Writing that is unappealing—awkward, tedious, or pompous—will impede the communication of authorized convictions. As Hexter points out in his "Rhetoric of History":

> Even where it is technically accurate, dull history is bad history to the extent to which it is dull . . . dull history blurs [the historian's] findings for himself and for those who read his writings. Those findings then fail to become, or rapidly cease to be, part of the "workable reserve," the readily accessible knowledge, of the writer and reader.[39]

And communicating what one knows to oneself and other researchers is not the same thing as explaining it to an audience who cannot recapitulate processes of inquiry and is not familiar with them in a general way. However, what is wordy, scholarly exact, or merely boring depends not only on the skills of researchers as writers, but also on the prior knowledge of the audience.

In the social sciences, writers are caught in a crossfire of expectations. They have to sound credible to fellow researchers while also achieving some communication with the public, for people think that they ought to be posted on discoveries concerning their everyday lives, the source of the researchers' data. But the technical language of research is not the language of ordinary, intentional discourse; it serves to communicate specialized meanings in arguments that are often subtle and difficult. This natural language of science is bound to be baffling and sometimes freezes, as Ziman put it, into "overmighty systems of thought."[40]

Rarely do researchers have the talents or training necessary for rewriting scientific arguments so that their claims can come to be known as warranted by general audiences. To attain this goal, research communication has to meet three conditions (each of them a potential hitch): those of access, belief, and impact—with understanding being the form of impact germane to science. (Outside of this realm of cognition and communication, there are other desirable forms of impact having less to do with understanding than with being moved.) Since one must catch one's hare before one can cook it, the access condition will always have to be met. Catching one's hare can be difficult enough, but the other conditions are even more tricky. Not only can reports be read without being believed, they can also be believed without being understood.

These are some of the difficulties of educational researchers as writers, and of their lay readers, too. It is helpful to look at these difficulties as a general dilemma of writing (method and style), rather than as a problem that linking agents and popularizers of research can solve. The dilemma stems from the fact that one pays for the choices one makes, and writing is no exception:

> In course of use a defined style becomes its own enemy. If one's writing is abstract, it will accommodate ideas, but it will fatigue the reader. If it is concrete, it will divert and relieve; but it will become cloying, and it will have difficulty encompassing ideas. If it is spare, it will come to seem abrupt; if it practices a degree of circumlocution, it will first seem elegant but will come to seem inflated. The lucid style is suspected of oversimplifying.[41]

The particular constitutions and strengths of different writing styles account for these defects and limitations.

And the dilemma goes on. It is true that there is a relation between the vitality of what one is saying and the appeal of one's style, but dryness and pedantry reflect some of the conventions of science. If research is written up snappily like a news item, or in the terse manner of an advertisement, it may catch the public's eye. Yet it cannot be given the critical appraisal depending on detail and precision. If detail and precision rule, research may not get itself read at all; if read, its point may disappear from view. In either case, one fails to communicate authorized convictions, and reasons supporting them.

The rhetoric of explanation is subject to the general dilemma of writing. If it becomes too discursive, it may stand in its own way, impeding both access and understanding. Some of these difficulties can be finessed. Footnotes, for instance, allow researchers to provide detail and backing without blurring the argument or losing their audience. But if researchers actually say everything that is to be said on both sides of a question, credence may be withheld, for people tend to believe assertions more than arguments.

This is particularly true for issues of urgent concern, where at least part of oneself wants to hear "only the voice, the simplicity, the conviction of authority": " 'Yes, I understand. It happens. Don't fret. Do this! Believe me! . . .' Or words to that effect—words utterly direct and transparent, words without a hint of prevarication or indirection."[42] It is for this and other reasons that research communication can shift away from explanation to persuasion.

THE PULL TOWARD PERSUASION

For communication people need, by the first rule of rhetoric, some point of agreement from which a meeting of minds can begin. Therefore, although belief should be earned rather than granted in research reporting, without some unearned assent at the outset, the occasion for communicating authorized convictions never arises. Since "it is rhetorically much more effective to insinuate crucial assumptions into the hearer's mind without focusing attention upon them,"[43] the reverse of explanation will often promote access and impact, though not necessarily understanding.

The trouble is that, once there is belief, there are few incentives for shaking it, to win it again in earnest. People can believe something that is warranted, while not coming to believe it for good reasons. But when one has got the assent of an audience to authorized convictions, why endanger it by drawing attention to the imperfect backing of claims, the place of judgment in drawing conclusions, and the different perspectives that may bear on the matter at hand?

Tokens of good faith in research reporting may weaken chances for having an impact. While "the concealment of values, by tactical ambiguity or denial . . . threatens moral integrity,"[44] pretending to an Olympian stance of neutrality may strengthen credibility. And how convincing are researchers, really, when reporting *all* "the false starts, the mistakes, the unnecessary complications, the difficulties and hesitations" that are part of their work? Since the scientific kitchen is messy, Ziman concludes that

> a scientific paper is not a candid autobiography, but a cunningly contrived piece of rhetoric. It . . . must persuade the reader of the veracity of the observer, his disinterestedness, his logical infallibility, and the complete necessity of his conclusions. . . . Scientists . . . favor the passive voice, the impersonal gender, and the latinized circumlocution, because these would seem to permit, in the circumstances, a climate of opinion within which, as it were, one can express relatively positive assertions in a tentative tone.[45]

While each piece of research is best understood as a contribution to discussion, the impersonal style tends to present scientific work as if its validity were already agreed upon. Yet this impersonality has its justification, too, for scientific language downplays the emotive uses of language in favor of the informative ones; it withdraws from particular examples, concrete practices, and intuitive imagery, aiming instead to separate things from everyday associations with their evocative meanings. This, in turn, raises problems of communication, since

> . . . even the most highly trained of us are wearied by long continuance of abstract communication; we want the thing brought down to us so that we can see it. . . . Thus the universe of Einstein is represented as "like" the surface of an orange; or the theory of entropy is illustrated by the figure of a desert in which Arabs are riding their camels hither and thither.[46]

Abstraction can impede communication, and analogies, imagery, and exemplars help people understand things. Explaining things may therefore involve the use of imagery, concrete examples, and other rhetorical devices, especially in offering facts and ideas that entail revising old beliefs.

In general, persuasion can be a means for helping others acquire justified beliefs—in bringing about conceptual change or inculcating moral habits as a basis of moral reasoning, for instance. In cases of this kind, persuasion as a kind of belief and as what we do to other people is a way station only, and may be defended as a means of access, with understanding the bases of conviction as the ultimate end. The pull toward persuasion does not deny or in itself vitiate the educative intent in research reporting, for teaching is a "variegated activity"; it "may include hinting, suggesting, urging, coaxing, encouraging, guiding, pointing out, conversing, instructing, informing, narrating, lecturing, demonstrating, exercising, testing, examining, criticizing, correcting, tutoring, drilling, and so on—everything, indeed, which does not belie the engagement to impart an understanding.[47]

What people call knowledge use in teacher education and teaching may come back full circle to education. This circle is not vicious, for it can make action more wise. In fact, policies that promote a separate and new activity called "knowledge use" in schools and classrooms are often not productive. They should be reformulated as policies encouraging the education of practitioners and the practice of those rhetorical arts in research reporting that will keep the voice of science alive in the conversation about education. In communicating their authorized convictions, educational researchers owe allegiance to *two* disciplined communities outside of social life that help maintain a critical interest in it: the republic of letters and the republic of science.

FOOTNOTES

1. See Richard Popkin, "Bible Criticism and Social Science," in *Methodological and Historical Essays in the Natural and Social Sciences*, ed. R.S. Cohen and M.W. Wartofsky (Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel, 1974), pp. 339-360.

2. See Jonas F. Soltis, "Education and the Concept of Knowledge," in *Philosophy and Education*, ed. Jonas F. Soltis, Eightieth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981, pp. 95-113, and Denis C. Phillips, "On What Scientists Know, and How They Know It," in *Learning and Teaching the Ways of Knowing*, ed. Elliot Eisner, Eighty-fourth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part 2 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), pp. 37-59.

3. John Dewey, *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* (New York: Macmillan, 1963), p. 189.

4. See, for the general point, Richard M. Weaver, *The Ethics of Rhetoric* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1953); for history, Jack H. Hexter, *Doing History* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1971); for educational research, see Robert E. Floden, "The Role of Rhetoric in Changing Teachers' Beliefs," *Teaching and Teacher Education* 1 (1985): 19-32.

5. For example, see Israel Scheffler, *Language of Education* (Springfield, Ill.: Charles C Thomas, 1960), and idem, *Conditions of Knowledge: An Introduction to Epistemology and Education* (Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman, 1965).

6. See Kenneth A. Strike, *Liberty and Learning* (Oxford, England: Martin Robertson, 1982); Floden, "The Role of Rhetoric in Changing Teachers' Beliefs"; and John S. Mill, "Coleridge," in *Essays on Politics and Culture*, ed. Gertrude Himmelfarb (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1963), pp. 130-31.

7. See, for instance, Karen B. Kepler, "BTES: Implications for Preservice Education of Teachers," in *Time to Learn*, ed. Carolyn Denham and Ann Lieberman (Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Education, U.S. Department of Education, 1980), pp. 139-57; and Gary D Fenstermacher, "Philosophy of Research on Teaching: Three Aspects," in *Handbook of Research on Teaching*, 3d ed., ed. Merlin C. Wittrock (New York: Macmillan, 1986), pp. 37-49.

8. See Michael Oakeshott, "The Voice of Poetry in the Conversation of Mankind," in *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1962), pp. 197-247; Margret Buchmann, "Improving Education by Talking: Arguments or Conversation?" *Teachers College Record* 86 (Spring 1985): 441-53; David K. Cohen and Janet A. Weiss, "Social Science and Social Policy: Schools and Race," *Educational Forum* 41 (May 1977): 393-413; and David K. Cohen and Michael S. Garet, "Reforming Educational Policy with Applied Social Research," *Harvard Educational Review* 45 (February 1975): 17-43.

9. See Scheffler, *Conditions of Knowledge*, especially p. 63.

10. Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, p. 188.

11. Charles W. Fisher, Nikola N. Filby, Richard Marliave, Leonard S. Cohen, Marilyn M. Dishaw, Jeffery E. Moore, and David C. Berliner, *Teaching Behaviors, Academic Learning Time and Student Achievement: Final Report of Phase III-B: Beginning Teacher Evaluation Study, Technical Report V-1* (San Francisco: Far West Regional Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, 1978), pp. 4-36. However, as Kepler points out in "BTES: Implications for Preservice Education of Teachers," her illuminating analysis of this influential research, the summary BTES report—addressed

presumably to a wider audience—omits the qualifications of the final report, and goes beyond legitimate conclusions in stating major findings.

12. Nicholas Rescher, *Methodological Pragmatism: A Systems-Theoretic Approach to the Theory of Knowledge* (Oxford, England: Basil Blackwell, 1977), p. 191.

13. Stephen Toulmin, "The Construal of Reality: Criticism in Modern and Postmodern Science," *Critical Inquiry* 9 (September 1982): 104.

14. See Israel Scheffler, *Science and Subjectivity* (Indianapolis, Ind.: Bobbs-Merrill, 1967), pp. 82-83, and Phillips, "What Scientists Know and How They Know It."

15. See William Hare, *Open-mindedness and Education* (Montreal, Canada: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1979); Israel Scheffler, "In Praise of the Cognitive Emotions," *Teachers College Record* 79 (December 1977): 167-85; Charles Taylor, "Responsibility for Self," in *The Identities of Persons*, ed. Amelie O. Rorty (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1976), pp. 281-99.

16. Israel Scheffler, *Of Human Potential: An Essay in the Philosophy of Education* (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985), p. 116.

17. See Margret Buchmann, "The Use of Research Knowledge in Teacher Education and Teaching," *American Journal of Education* 92 (August 1984): 421-39; idem, "What Is Irrational About Knowledge Utilization," *Curriculum Inquiry* 15 (Summer 1985): 153-68.

18. Max Black, *The Labyrinth of Language* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1968), p. 99.

19. Michael Polanyi, *The Study of Man* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), p. 68.

20. See Scheffler, *Conditions of Knowledge*; Strike, *Liberty and Learning*.

21. Immanuel Kant, "The Critique of Pure Reason," in *Great Books of the Western World*, vol. 42: *Kant*, ed. Robert M. Hutchins (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952), pp. 240.

22. See Peter A. Minkus, "Arguments That Aren't Arguments," in *Informal Logic: The First International Symposium*, ed. J. Anthony Blair and Ralph H. Johnson (Inverness, Calif.: Edgepress, 1980), pp. 69-76.

23. Quintillian, cited in Chaim Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca, *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969), p. 246.

24. See Black, *The Labyrinth of Language*, p. 112.

25. See Joseph R. Gusfield, *The Culture of Public Problems: Drinking-Driving and the Symbolic Order* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981); and idem, "The Literary Rhetoric of Science: Comedy and Pathos in Drinking Driver Research," *American Sociological Review* 41 (February 1976): 16-34.

26. In his chapter in this volume, Sirotnik defines the term "explanation" in a narrow sense in which it may be distinguished from understanding. I use the term in the ordinary (and broader scientific) sense in which it implies the pursuit of understanding.

27. Robert J. Connors, "The Rhetoric of Explanation: Explanatory Rhetoric from Aristotle to 1850," *Written Communication* 1 (April 1984): 189-210.

28. Samuel P. Newman, *A Practical System of Rhetoric* (New York: Dayton and Newman, 1842), p. 23.

29. See Buchmann, "Improving Education by Talking."

30. Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, p. 5.

31. See Michael Polanyi, *The Study of Man* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), p. 66.

32. The following section has been adapted from "Problems of Practice and Principle in Research Communication" (Paper presented at the meeting of the Philosophy of Education Society, Montreal, April 1986).

33. Ben Jonson, *Timber: Or Discoveries: Being Observations on Men and Manners* (London: J. M. Dent, 1898), p. 3.

34. Alan Montefiore, *Neutrality and Impartiality* (Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 20.

35. Minkus, "Arguments That Aren't Arguments," p. 73.

36. Alvin W. Gouldner, "The Sociologist as Partisan: Sociology and the Welfare State," *American Sociologist* 3 (1968): 103-116. See also, Judith N. Shklar, *Ordinary Vices* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1984).

37. Gouldner, "The Sociologist as Partisan," p. 112.

38. See Harriet Zuckerman, *Scientific Elite* (New York: Free Press, 1977).

39. Hexter, *Doing History*, pp. 45-46.

40. J. M. Ziman, *Public Knowledge: An Essay Concerning the Social Dimension of Science* (Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 1968), p. 169.

41. Weaver, *The Ethics of Rhetoric*, p. 209.

42. Oliver Sacks, *A Leg to Stand On* (New York: Summit Books, 1984), pp. 92-93.

43. Black, *The Labyrinth of Language*, p. 99.

44. Martin Rein, "Social Policy Analysis as the Interpretation of Beliefs," *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* 37 (1971): 305.

45. J. M. Ziman, "Information, Communication, Knowledge," *Nature* 2 (1969): 319.

46. Weaver, *The Ethics of Rhetoric*, p. 209.

47. Michael Oakeshott, "Education: The Engagement and Its Frustration," in *Education and the Development of Reason*, ed. R. F. Dearden, Paul H. Hirst, and Richard S. Peters (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), pp. 25-26.

CHAPTER XI

Networking for Educational Improvement

BEATRICE A. WARD AND JOSEPH T. PASCARELLI

Educational improvement is a matter of high interest to educators, policymakers, and others mindful of the quality and appropriateness of the educational opportunities provided to children and youth in this nation. And well it should be!

Within the next ten years or so, a large proportion of the teachers, school principals, and other school administrators currently employed in public schools throughout the nation will retire. These retirements, combined with recent increases in school enrollments in many areas of the country and with a trend suggesting that many of the new individuals entering the profession may be expected to leave teaching after only five or so years of experience,[1] create a need to identify, train, and induct into the profession hundreds of thousands of individuals during the decade that lies ahead.

Further, the influx of immigrants and refugees from Southeast Asia, Latin America, and other areas of the world, many of whom have limited proficiency in English, has brought a need to educate students whose acculturation patterns and service needs differ from those of students from nonimmigrant, English-speaking backgrounds.

The extent of public concern for the quality of education is reflected in the recommendations advanced in the dozen or so national reports issued in the early 1980s.[2] Particularly at the state level, new legislation has been enacted to encourage and support implementation of the suggested improvements.

Many of the ideas and recommendations contained herein resulted from work conducted in collaboration with the University of Illinois and the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. The authors wish to acknowledge and thank these agencies for providing the opportunity to explore the use of collaborative networks for educational improvement.

The expected changes in teaching and administrative personnel in schools, the changing school population, and the move to improve educational programs for all students present educators with both an opportunity and a challenge. Opportunity resides in the potential for improvement of our education system, preschool through graduate school, through use of *new* training approaches to prepare *new* professionals in *new* and *better* approaches to (a) the conduct of schooling, (b) the preparation of those who carry out the schooling process, and (c) the conduct of inquiry into obtaining effective teaching, learning, administration, and curriculum. If such new approaches indeed are found to be better than existing techniques and are therefore adopted, a cadre of new professionals will enter our schools ready to carry out improved practices in the education process.[3] The challenge is to move ahead with design and implementation of new and better approaches to education in a rigorous and practical manner and, at the same time, to accomplish the necessary training and desired improvements within the short time frame that the anticipated retirements impose and within the limited resources available to educators. If we fail to grasp this opportunity or meet the challenge, a similar opening may not occur for many years, if at all.

In order to meet this challenge effectively, it is necessary for educators, legislators, community leaders, parents, and others to recognize three crucial factors that have inhibited school improvement efforts in the past. These are (a) promising more than can be delivered, (b) failing to deal effectively with the reality of limited resources, and (c) failing to recognize and initiate opportunities for collaboration and resource sharing.[4]

In particular, the promise of collaboration and resource sharing through the networking of agencies and individuals warrants attention. Bringing together education agencies and institutions for improvements in education is *timely* and *necessary*. Collaborative networks are viable and practical vehicles for developing and maintaining the skilled professionals required and for developing improved education programs in a cost-effective manner. Such networks may be the only way to accomplish the necessary training of education personnel and the desired improvement of education within the imposed time frame.

Recent studies provide information to assist in enactment of collaborative efforts focused upon improvement of education.[5] Building from this knowledge base, Ward identified four characteristics of collaboration that appear to be particularly important if the efforts that are undertaken are to improve education.[6] These include: (a) parity, (b) problem focus, (c) responsibility, and (d) context-relevance.

The discussion that follows first considers the four characteristics of effective collaboration and presents ideas regarding their application in educational improvement. Then, descriptions are given of some networks presently in operation. The educational improvements upon which the networks are focusing and actions they have taken to support both effective collaboration and accomplishment of the intended improvements are outlined.[7]

Characteristics of Effective Collaboration

COLLABORATION GIVES THE PARTICIPANTS PARITY

When educational institutions and agencies undertake collaborative efforts in education, an initial tendency is to enter into discussions about how one agency can help the other(s). The predominant notion is that individuals in one setting are more skilled, possess more accurate insights, are better equipped to bring about a desired improvement than those in the other settings. The less the collaborators have worked together in the past, the more this attitude appears to prevail in the minds of both the people in the schools and those in other agencies.

As a result, a *work on* rather than a *work with* posture[8] underlies many joint efforts among teachers, school administrators, university professors, and others. For example, university-based collaboration is prone to be viewed as the "expert" from higher education providing solutions to the local education agency.[9] Business and industry collaboration is apt to be perceived as "efficient and worldly managers" helping inefficient schools operate as a business.

Such endeavors usually are conceptualized and planned by individuals in one agency or institution (for example, a university) followed by contact with persons in the agency which is to be *worked on* (for example, the school or school district) to persuade persons in this setting to join the "collaborative" effort. The extent to which the activities resemble collaborative rather than authoritative interactions depends largely upon the insistence of school personnel that whatever is done be workable in and relevant to the school setting. Parity seldom exists. The knowledge, skills, and insights of the school-based participants are downgraded. The university participants provide most, if not all, of the input regarding content, procedures, and processes to be followed.

In contrast, collaboration that gives *all* participants parity begins with meetings and discussions among representatives of *all* potential participants. While one agency, such as a university, may bring to these discussions the capability to provide training in particular areas, to evaluate various parts of the education program, and/or to develop new instructional materials and strategies, the needs, concerns, and capabilities of other participants also are considered prior to selection of the expertise to be applied. Mutual exploration of various avenues for accomplishing the desired improvements may test, apply, discard, or redirect several areas of skill and knowledge.

To illustrate, consider an activity related to an area of educational improvement emphasized at the beginning of this chapter: effective education of students with limited proficiency in English. Improvement based on parity would consider teachers' knowledge of successes and difficulties while teaching these students, administrators' insights into intervening factors such as student transfer and materials acquisition, along with professors' knowledge of current requirements and advancements in the instruction of such students. The improvement to be undertaken would be *jointly* designed to respond to the strengths and weaknesses of the site(s) in which it would be tested, and, if successful, implemented.

Pine went so far as to state that true collaboration "answers the question of who has the right to create knowledge by arguing that the expected beneficiaries . . . should design and carry out their own research [or training, curriculum development, program development, evaluation, and so forth]."[10]

Yet, Tikunoff, Ward, and Griffin found that to achieve parity requires constant and careful attention to the educational improvement efforts that are underway.[11] They argued that (a) inclusion of multiple representatives of some role groups may be an aid to achievement of parity in collaborative R&D efforts, and (b) a simplistic notion of parity may be at odds with provision of opportunity for collaborators to learn from and react to the expertise of all members of a team.

Further, within collaborative efforts, parity in *change* receives as much attention as parity in input and decision making. To illustrate this aspect of parity, consider the second challenge that was identified earlier: training of large numbers of new teachers and administrators. In a network built on parity, agencies and individuals across various levels of the education community would participate in identifying, designing, and enacting the improvements necessary to provide new personnel who were well trained. Changes in university-based teacher and administrator training; in in-service professional development conducted by university, intermediate agency, or local school district personnel; in the roles and responsibilities of professors, teachers, and administrators; in university, school district, and school organization for professional education; and in the standards applied for entrance into the education profession—*all* would be considered likely areas for change. *All* agencies would receive equal attention as sites in which a new *modus operandi* would be required.

In sum, to achieve parity in collaborative educational improvement efforts, no agency or institution should work alone to define the ways in which the knowledge and expertise contributed by the participating agencies can be made available to the other members. Likewise, no agency or institution should expect to meet the challenges that face education today through implementation of improvements at a single level of the education system.

Rather, prior to undertaking specific improvement efforts, collaborative networks should explore and become familiar with the expertise that is brought by each participating agency or individual. This might be accomplished through collaborative documentation of the conditions that appear to be contributing to one or more of the problems that prevail. It also might be achieved through seminars on topics of interest to the entire group. Persons representing each of the participating agencies and role groups might be charged with providing insights and understandings relative to the current state of knowledge and practice in a particular problem area. Collaborative improvement efforts might be initiated around one or more of these topics with the expertise of all role groups contributing to the design and implementation of each activity.

As implementation begins, parity further requires that all participating agencies be seen as possible locales for needed improvements. The burden for improvement does not reside with only one participating group.

COLLABORATION FOCUSES UPON PERSISTENT AND IMPORTANT SCHOOL-BASED PROBLEMS

In order to assure that improvements occur in the education program as it is carried out in the day-to-day world of schools, it is not only important that the characteristic of parity be in operation. It also is essential that the effort focus upon resolution of problems that are seen as persistent and important by those who will bear the brunt of resolving them. (See chapter 1.) Although collaboration may be rewarding to the participants regardless of the scope of the effort, collaborators in more effective networks expend their energies and other resources toward resolution of problems that are of considerable importance in their particular setting(s). Participant agreement that this is the case adds to the strength of the work that is undertaken.

The "real world" of educational R&D paints a grim picture in this regard. For example, Howey noted that many of the competent researchers in education have well established foci for their inquiry from which they are loath to detour regardless of the importance of other problems identified by their collaborators.[12] Tikunoff, Ward, and Griffin suggested that researchers often study problems which teachers and administrators consider inconsequential.[13] They reported that many teacher educators have expertise in specific areas of teaching or curriculum or in a single paradigm for training and, therefore, impose this training upon teachers or administrators who do not want or need it. Schlechty stated that the reward system of the public school often does not honor conduct of research, training, and curriculum development or evaluation as part of the role of the teacher or the school administrator.[14] He further indicated that the maintenance needs of the public school and university are likely to overwhelm the planning needs that must be met if collaborative efforts are to focus upon critical problems.

In contrast, when the problem-solving characteristic of effective collaboration is taken seriously, participating researchers are required to attend to whatever factors comprise and influence the problem(s) to be resolved, and hence are less likely to impose their own area of inquiry upon the other collaborators. Teacher educators are expected to provide training in whatever skills and knowledge are required to improve the current situation, or find others who can do so, and therefore find it difficult to shape the effort to fit the training content and paradigms they generally employ. In fact, as Griffin noted, they may be required to recognize and utilize process-oriented rather than product-oriented professional development strategies "in which teachers and other school persons need not be 'given' the development but [are] given opportunities to discover, through their own inquiry and professional activity, those processes which ultimately result in growth."[15]

A positive consequence of such collaborative efforts is that research, service, and practice are tied together regardless of the collaborating agencies or individuals or the problem(s) on which the effort focuses. The researcher no longer is in an ivory tower, teachers and school administrators no longer are low-status members of the education profession. Teacher educators study and analyze teaching and schooling in order to develop appropriate training experiences. Inquiry, understanding, and action are linked in ways that facilitate dialogue among the various role groups. (See chapter 10 for the role of knowledge-based explanation in this conversation.) As stated by Oja and Pine, "education practice as it is carried out in classrooms and schools is the first business of the collaborating team. Practice becomes the crucible for innovation, an obtrusive measure of assumptions, speculations, and theories."[16]

When collaboration lacks a problem-solving focus, old impressions, old actions, and old excuses have a much greater opportunity to misdirect or circumvent the intent of the effort, if not to destroy the entire endeavor.

REALMS OF RESPONSIBILITY ARE ASSIGNED BASED ON KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL

Collaborative professional development and school improvement efforts are no different than other professional activities. If the work is to be done—that is, if the desired improvements in professional development and schooling are to occur—the collaborators must assume responsibility for carrying out the required research, development, training, implementation, and evaluation activities. Some responsibilities involve challenging, growth-enhancing activities. Others are mundane tasks that must be done in order to accomplish the desired improvement, but are of little interest to any participant.

A danger in any collaborative effort undertaken jointly by university professors and school practitioners is that prior habit will prevail and that practitioners will defer to the professors. When this occurs, practitioners typically become nothing more than graduate assistants or data collectors working *for* rather than *with* the professors. The professors take on the challenging and interesting tasks, the practitioners the mundane ones. Clearly, such a circumstance does not promote true collaboration.

To avoid such a situation and at the same time assure that required tasks are completed, careful delineation of responsibility is needed.

Someone must be assigned as the coordinator or orchestrator of the collaborative effort. Working with the other members of the group, this individual then outlines the activities or tasks to be completed at various points in the group's endeavor. The knowledge, skills, and insights of all participants are considered as assignments are made. Access to necessary settings and facilities also is arranged.

One of the collaborative teams from the study of interactive research and development[17] serves as an example of the ways in which responsibilities may be assigned to various team members. A teacher educator was named team coordinator. He handled details such as meeting schedules, arranging substitutes for teachers, and obtaining meeting space. He also was responsible for serving as the leader of the team's work relative to development of in-service teacher training in how to reduce classroom distractions.

Teachers were responsible for interviewing other teachers and preparing a list of problems teachers considered to be persistent and important. When two or three problems that warranted the team's attention had been identified, a researcher conducted a search of the literature and provided the group members with a summary of what was known about each problem area. Using this information and the data on teachers' concerns, the group selected classroom distractions as a problem area for which few solutions had been reported and, moreover, for which little teacher training had been designed.

The researcher then was charged with developing a plan for identifying the dimensions of the problem as it existed in schools in the region. The classrooms of the teachers on the collaborative team served as one set of study sites. They were paired with teachers who were not on the team and who taught the same grade levels in other schools. An intervention based on teachers' analysis of the data for their respective classes was designed jointly by the teachers and the teacher educator and attempts at resolving the distractions that had been observed were studied.

As data were being collected and analyzed, the teachers and teacher educator initiated work on an in-service teacher education program to reduce distractions in other classrooms. The training was conducted by *all* the collaborative team members with each member having specific areas of responsibility.

Further, as part of the collaborative effort, team members contributed to the educational knowledge base by preparing reports of their findings about classroom distractions. Research reports and professional journal articles were written collaboratively by the researcher and the teachers.

Reflecting upon the potential for professional development of participation in collaborative efforts in which responsibility for substantive aspects of an educational improvement effort is assigned to each team or group member, Schlechty commented:

> . . . by participating in the kinds of activities suggested by the interactive research [collaborative] framework, teachers (and I would add school administrators) are more likely to come to embrace the values of research *as a process*, and are thus more likely to view research as a valid basis from which to inform practice. I suspect that, in the short run, the greatest benefit to result from interactive research [collaborative efforts] will be found in what it does to educators' attitudes toward the role of research in the educational enterprise, rather than in the substantive breakthroughs the research will yield.[18]

COLLABORATION TAKES PLACE IN THE SETTINGS IN WHICH EDUCATION OCCURS

The final characteristic of effective collaboration is the context-relevance of the work that is done. More specifically, the collaboration focuses upon improvements in the schools and classrooms of the network participants.

In order to understand better the viewpoints expressed by various group members, participants are invited (perhaps required) to visit one another's sites. University professors, other researchers, state agency staff, businessmen, school board members, and the like visit and observe in the schools and classes of participating practitioners. While in the schools, these individuals also conduct information sessions for the entire staff.

Likewise, practitioners visit and observe the other team members as they teach university courses, carry out state level activities, conduct business affairs, conduct board meetings, and so forth. And, practitioners, too, are expected to hold information sessions at these sites. During the sessions, they describe important education problems existing in the schools and indicate the steps the team or group is taking to identify and develop ways to alleviate them.

Ultimately, improvement of students' learning experiences and outcomes in the schools and classrooms of their respective locales becomes the primary goal of the collaborative network participants. Not only must concern for the initial problem area selected be shared by these different types of participants, but, in addition, the problem must be seen as a means to some larger end.

Collaborative Networks in Operation

Contrary to the characteristics of effective collaboration outlined above, much of the literature on the development of networks has featured them as voluntary, loosely organized, and informal structures dependent on such concepts as barter, volunteerism, and the good will or altruism of those involved.[19] Networks typically have been described as leaderless, interdisciplinary, spontaneous, and lacking in continuity and longevity. Yet, as self-forming and free-standing entities, they have become somewhat fashionable. Networking for the sake of networking—people connecting with people—in and of itself is seen as a worthy venture, possibly because these clusters of individuals share a common interest or purpose, engage in idea swapping and resource sharing, and, in general, feel better connected to others sharing similar concerns.[20]

However, more effective networks—those that accomplish significant improvements in the education programs of the participants' schools—differ markedly from the many informal, loosely coupled collectives that exist. Effective networks are recognized as self-reliant, involving autonomous individuals or agencies who cohere around shared interests and values, develop resource-sharing solutions to problems, and, in the process, establish new patterns of community and collegiality.[21] Networkers take seriously their roles as scouts, scanners, and matchmakers. The participants see networking as a serious way of doing business. The network is expected to be a productive alternative to the established system of educational improvement. Members are committed both to the process of collaborating effectively and to achievement of the prescribed improvements in their education programs. Participation frequently cuts across educational role groups and institutions to identify the very best in human and material resources to solve a given problem. As suggested by Clark, networks provide "organizational mechanisms through which educators have the chance to link researchers, policymakers and influencers, and educational practitioners for the purpose of improving schools."[22] Information sharing and mutual support for change are among the benefits that result.

Descriptions follow of several effective networks. Although brief, they provide examples of the variation that exists with regard to membership, goals, and operation.

NETWORKING OF A UNIVERSITY AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS

The Metropolitan School Study Council is among the "senior" networks in education. It was established during the early 1940s by Teachers College, Columbia University, and school districts in the vicinity of the College. Although the Council went through a period of decline, it was rejuvenated in 1976 through renewed commitment on the part of the College and the interest and energies of a cadre of professors. Currently it is an active, productive network involving the College and thirty-seven school districts from three states. It is set up to enhance the repertoires of school people while at the same time keeping the College connected and involved with schools.[23]

Twice a year an executive board meets to plan the year's goals and activities. The board includes superintendents, school principals, and Teachers College faculty members. The Council mounts workshops, conferences, and meetings of all kinds in response to critical issues and problem areas facing the participating districts. The Council director, who also is a professor at Teachers College, coordinates and manages council activities. Because the Council works outside existing bureaucracies, on-target workshops and other efforts can be mounted more quickly than could be done by any of the individual member agencies. What is more, all agencies benefit. Focusing on school improvement requires the workshops, institutes, and conferences to cover skills and knowledge that are relevant to improvement of curriculum, instruction, and management in the actual educational settings of the Council members—that is, schools and classrooms.[24] Participation in these meetings is open to all levels of the education structure, with special attention given to involvement of the practitioners who will carry out the intended improvements.

Having worked together for several years and established trust in one another, the reinvigorated Council recently has initiated several large-scale collaborative research and development projects that require considerable support and risk taking on the part of the participants. One was a study of Interactive R&D on Schooling.[25] Others are focusing on changing teacher education programs, introducing an induction period in the teaching career, and creating instrumentation for keeping track of staff development plans and outcomes.

NETWORKING OF GEOGRAPHICALLY SEPARATED EDUCATION AGENCIES

A network for school improvement has been formed in the Pacific region that includes the University of Guam; the College of the Northern Mariana Islands; the Departments of Education of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Northern Mariana Islands, the Republic of Palau, the Marshall Islands, Guam, and American Samoa; and the Pacific Region Educational Program of the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. Although most members of this network are separated from one another by vast geographic distances, the reality of resource scarcity, isolation, limited training opportunities, limited access to information, and a range of cross-cultural issues prompted the various members to seek avenues for working together. Formation of the network in 1982 has encouraged interaction and resource sharing that previously did not exist. As a result, the members not only come together to discuss common problems and concerns; they jointly sponsor and conduct collaborative school improvement efforts.

Presently, network efforts are focused on the school principal—more specifically, provision of professional development experiences for principals throughout the region that are anchored in sound educational R&D findings and practices and also adapted to the unique cross-cultural needs of the area. Graduate level course training designed around locally identified needs and with built-in field application experiences serves as the nucleus for the effort. For training that develops generalizable competencies in school-based leadership, the principals are brought together from across the Pacific. Thus, for each participating principal, the number of individuals with whom he or she can share ideas and effective program features is greatly increased. In addition, at each network site, training is provided which stresses leadership and school improvement requirements that are specific to that site. To support application of what is learned, principals are required to convert their new knowledge and skills into building plans for action to improve their schools. (See chapter 4.)

Each network agency contributes resources to this effort. The higher education institutions sponsor and design course work. The office of the Trust Territory of the Pacific supports attendance of teams of principals from each jurisdiction in the graduate courses dealing with generalizable leadership competencies. The Department of Education of American Samoa supplies instructors for the general training. Each department of education sponsors the on-site training.

The Northwest Laboratory contributes staff who design, teach, and monitor course work and field experiences and outcomes.

Across all the network agencies, major attention is given to maintenance of information and resource sharing and to upholding the members' commitment to ongoing and new collaborative efforts. Telecommunication linkages, including use of computer networks, written memoranda, journals, and telephones help to sustain involvement. A coordinating council, comprised primarily of the chief executive officer for each network member, meets at least twice each year to review progress of existing collaborative efforts and identify new areas for action.

NETWORKING MULTIPLE TYPES OF AGENCIES

The SUNY Purchase Westchester School Partnership represents a consortium of seventeen school districts in Westchester County, New York, the Southern Westchester Board of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES), the State University of New York (SUNY) at Purchase, and representatives of business and community agencies. Established with support of the American Can Foundation and the New York State Department of Education, the Partnership revolves around the goal of developing and sustaining innovative programs for private sector involvement in public education.

The goals of the Partnership are somewhat broadly defined and encompass a variety of efforts or "projects." An overall purpose is resource sharing. Within this framework, more specific objectives are established. Presently, they include: (a) clarifying the relationship between academic expectations of colleges and school district curricula, (b) strengthening the foundations requirements in the educational experiences of students, (c) establishing of colloquia for school board members and others responsible for educational policy, (d) improving instructional effectiveness, and (e) motivating the unmotivated student. Addressing these, the Partnership has established a teacher training institute, an aesthetic education program, a fellowship project for guidance counselors, a leadership training center, and a program to identify or develop instructional and other strategies that motivate unmotivated students.

Sound planning is required to coordinate work across the agencies. Each program in the Partnership is led by a superintendent and administered by a director with the guidance of an advisory committee composed of educators and community leaders. An executive steering committee representing all agencies and an executive director for the Partnership approve, manage, and monitor all activities.

NETWORKING SCHOOLS IN A LARGE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Schools in large school districts can become as isolated one from another and as unfamiliar with the successes of their cohorts as school districts and other agencies that are separated by geography and purpose as well as the demands of day-to-day operation. Formation of a network of schools that have common problems, are undertaking similar improvements, serve similar types of students, and so forth can do much to alleviate these problems and increase the efficiency and effectiveness of school improvement efforts within large school districts.

One such network has been created in North Clackamas, Oregon. It brings together thirty-six schools in the district for purposes of school improvement. It is comprised of a school leadership team from each school. Each team includes the school principal and four to six lead teachers from the school. Each team is charged with identifying aspects of the education program, instruction, school management, and so forth that require improvement in their particular school. They serve as the leaders for inquiring into the effectiveness of the school and for designing and installing needed improvements.

The network members meet three times a year (early fall, early winter, and late spring) for three-day work sessions. At these sessions they report progress and, through use of outside resource persons whom the district makes available to the network, obtain input regarding the aspects of effective schools, effective instruction, and effective management that are most relevant to their respective improvement efforts. Assistance and tools also are provided for monitoring the effectiveness of the education program at the school and, more specifically, the effectiveness of the particular improvements they have underway. Time is devoted to cross-team sharing of improvement activities conducted during the interim between meetings and to sharing of materials and processes that have been developed and implemented in each school. Team planning for future improvement activities is given considerable attention and time. At the end of the three days, each school reports on its goals for the months ahead so that network schools with similar concerns can join together. What is more, as team members present information and train others in their procedures and programs and as principals share and develop new leadership techniques with each other, they are acquiring peer learning and coaching skills which, in turn, increase the capacity to improve education in their respective schools.

A central steering committee, consisting of principals and district administrators, designs, refines, redesigns, and realigns the professional development offered to the school leadership teams. Over time, this training is becoming progressively more sophisticated and complex in its content and approach.

Over the three years that the network has been in operation, the focus on school improvement has been maintained. Such stability of focus has encouraged school leadership teams to engage in increasingly complex and creative improvement efforts, to take risks, to experiment and learn, and simultaneously to be responsible and accountable for improvement of their respective schools. Improvements that originally focused on procedures and materials now are emphasizing teacher and principal change. The open and continuing communication that the network generates has built trust, mutual respect, professional responsibility, and also self-reward across the professional role groups in the school district. While improvement in student performance is beginning to be evident on standardized tests and other measures of achievement, the school board, school district administrators, and the teams themselves have come to realize that school-wide improvement is a long-term proposition and that observable impact upon students may require at least three to five years.

NETWORKING INDIVIDUAL EDUCATORS

The networks that have been described thus far began through formal agreements and commitments to capitalize upon an expanded resource base. The support of established institutions maintains network operations. Another sort of network that can produce equally important growth and improvement for the participants is one that is formed by individuals who serve in similar positions and who wish to share information, ideas, and resources regardless of whether this is done with the backing of the institutions from which they come.

One network of this type began informally. It involves school principals who work in schools in several school districts within a geographic area that accommodates travel by car to network meetings. As one member stated, "We felt alone in our schools. Isolated. There were so many state level demands. No one to share with. We needed to be renewed—to see our schools from a fresh perspective."

This need for professional renewal was translated into a series of ongoing, bi-monthly, self-designed "sharing and training" seminars that to date have focused on leadership skills such as problem identification and problem solving, team building, school climate, proactive leadership, managing others, and specific foci such as conducting effective meetings, working with teachers in classrooms, being visible in the school, and so on. Attendance is voluntary but all network members generally attend. Responsibility for planning and hosting network meetings rotates among the members.

According to the members, the collegiality, the sharing, the coaching, and shadowing that have resulted from network activities are as important as the new knowledge and skills to which they have been exposed. They have learned how to use each other's resources and tailor them to their own needs.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have pointed out several complex problems that confront education in our nation. We have recommended collaborative networks as an approach for developing the new programs, procedures, curricula, and personnel necessary for effective resolution of the problems. We have outlined four characteristics of collaborative arrangements that go beyond being symbolic ventures set up to avoid rather than resolve problems and become productive forces for school improvement. We have provided examples of various combinations of individuals and agencies that have come together to form effective networks.

What remains is for other constituent groups to come together in arrangements that also combine and use the special expertise of the divergent members to improve schools. As this occurs, the participants should remember that collaborative networks that work on innovative, significant school improvements fail more often than they succeed.[26] Further, such networks require continuous investment of time and energy on the part of each member. Ultimately, the question that must be asked is: What makes for this commitment by individuals and institutions, this investment of self? Perhaps it is mutual empowerment, the taking control of problems, and the ability to recognize and use the individual and collective potential of the network for school improvement that sustains such effort.

Footnotes

1. See, for example, Linda Darling-Hammond, *Beyond the Commission Reports: The Coming Crisis in Teaching* (Santa Monica, Calif.: Rand Corporation, 1984); Marsha Levine, *Excellence in Education: Some Lessons from America's Best Run Companies and Schools*, Prepared for the Committee for Economic Development (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute, 1984); Phillip C. Schlechty and Victor S. Vance, "Do Academically Able Teachers Leave Education? The North Carolina Case," *Phi Delta Kappan* 63 (October 1981): 106-112.

2. See, for example, National Commission on Excellence in Education, *A Nation At Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1983); Education Commission of the States, *Action for Excellence: A Comprehensive Plan to Improve Our Nation's Schools* (Denver, Colo.: The Commission, 1983); John I. Goodlad, *A Place Called School* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1984); California Round Table on Educational Opportunity, *Teaching: Making It an Effective and Attractive Profession* (Sacramento, Calif.: State Department of Education, 1985).

3. Beatrice A. Ward, "Clinical Teacher Education and Professional Teacher Development," in *Reality and Reform in Clinical Teacher Education*, ed. James V. Hoffman and Sara A. Edwards (New York: Random House, 1986), pp. 65-86.

4. Seymour Sarason, Joseph T. Pascarelli, and Leslie Crohn, *Fulfilling the Promise: A Fresh Look at Collaboration and Resource Sharing* (Portland, Oreg.: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 1985).

5. See, for example, Gary A. Griffin, *Interactive Research and Development on Schooling: Antecedents, Purposes, and Significance for School Improvement* (Austin, Tex.: Research and Development Center for Teacher Education, University of Texas, 1983); Leslie Huling, "The Effects on Teachers of Participation in a Collaborative Action Research Program" (Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New York, 1982); Sharon N. Oja and Gerald J. Pine, *A Two Year Study of Teachers' Stages of Development in Relation to Collaborative Action Research in Schools*, Final Report, NIE Contract No. G-81-0040 (Durham, N.H.: University of New Hampshire, 1983); William J. Tikunoff and Beatrice A. Ward, "Collaborative Research on Teaching," *Elementary School Journal* 83 (March 1983): 427-52.

6. Beatrice A. Ward, "Collaboration: A Vehicle for Educational Improvement and Professional Development," in *Strengthening the Role of the University in School Improvement* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois, 1985).

7. For further information about the networks that are discussed, see Sarason et al., *Fulfilling the Promise*, and Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, *Interorganizational Arrangements for Collaborative Efforts* (Portland, Oreg.: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 1980).

8. William J. Tikunoff, Beatrice A. Ward, and Gary A. Griffin, *Interactive Research on Teaching Study*, Final Report, NIE Grant No. OB-NIE-G-78-0103 (San Francisco, Calif.: Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, 1979).

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10. Gerald J. Pine, "Collaborative Action Research: The Integration of Research and Service," in *Research, Adaptation, and Change* (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Teacher Corps Research Adaptation Cluster, 1980).

11. William J. Tikunoff, Beatrice A. Ward, and Gary A. Griffin, "The IR&DT Experience" (Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Boston, 1980).

12. Kenneth Howey, "Interactive Research and Development on Teaching: Toward Adaptation of the Strategy," in *Toward Adaptation of the IR&DT Strategy: Proceedings of a Working Meeting*, ed. Ann Lieberman (San Francisco, Calif.: Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, 1979), pp. 27-32.

13. Tikunoff et al., "The IR&DT Experience."

14. Phillip C. Schlechty, "IR&DT as a Means of Linking Preservice and In-service Teacher Education," in *Toward Adaptation of the IR&DT Strategy*, ed. Lieberman, pp. 27-32.

15. Griffin, *Interactive Research and Development on Schooling*, p. 14.

16. Oja and Pine, *A Two Year Study of Teachers' Stages of Development*, p. 22.

17. Tikunoff et al., *Interactive R&D on Teaching Study*.

18. Schlechty, "IR&DT as a Means of Linking Preservice and In-service Teacher Education."

19. Sarason et al., *Fulfilling the Promise*.

20. Joseph Pascarelli, *Networking: An Essential Dissemination Process* (Portland, Oreg.: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 1979).

21. Sarason et al., *Fulfilling the Promise*.

22. David L. Clark, "Factors Affecting the Success of Interorganizational Arrangements for School Improvement," in *Strengthening the Role of the University in School Improvement*, p. 9.

23. Ann Lieberman, "Enhancing School Improvement through Collaboration," in *Strengthening the Role of the University in School Improvement*.

24. Ibid.

25. Griffin, *Interactive Research and Development on Schooling*.

26. Clark, "Factors Affecting the Success of Interorganizational Arrangements for School Improvement."

CHAPTER XII

Toward a Healthy Ecosystem

JOHN I. GOODLAD

The Ecological Community of Schooling

Preceding chapters have taken our system of schooling as it is, that is, a loosely coupled enterprise of often conflicting interests and overlapping turf. Too often, perhaps most often, the system and not education drives the enterprise. "*The system, whatever it is, is precisely what doesn't change* in the established arrangements of educational institutions and in the reiterated arguments that guide their behavior."[1]

Yet, when one takes the system *qua* system as a given, and then speaks to improvement, presumably one has in mind improving the ability of the system to provide education and, therefore, changing the system itself. To this proposition, Green counters: "There are no alternatives to the system as we know it, and . . . what are often proposed as alternatives *within* it are in reality proposals that would merely extend the power and reach of the system we already have without significantly changing it at all."[2]

There is an alternative, of course, and that is the dismantling of the system itself. One begins with the system, not to improve it but to understand how to assure its collapse in favor of something else. For example, money normally allocated by the State is given to parents in the form of vouchers to be used in "buying" education for their children. Settings called schools become client-driven rather than system-driven. But, one suspects, Green's somewhat cynical principle would still hold. The state merely extends its power and reach by setting the conditions that such settings must meet if parents are to be permitted to spend their vouchers there. The potential for more tightly coupling mandated school conditions with dollars and, therefore, for regulating compliance and accountability is at least as great as the potential for varied, innovative educational programs.

Preceding chapters, implicitly or explicitly, pose alternatives within the system—that is, they assume its existence, its component parts, and its continuation. They do not assume, however, a system "out there," with its own identity, even though we could make a strong case for such a reality. A more accurate summary is that most of the chapters assume a comprehensive system of schooling composed of policies, organizational and administrative structures, curricular arrangements, instructional practices, and a broad array of actors from students to legislators. The central thrust of improvement is not to eliminate the system but to eliminate the pathological aberrations causing the system to be dysfunctional. Speaking of one part of the system, Sirotnik concludes: "Schools . . . have been invaded long enough." But he has in mind invasion from within the system, not just from some external, alien source.

In most chapters we have chosen to review the system of schooling as an ecological community functioning as a unit. The metaphors for change and improvement have to do, then, with health and sound functioning rather than with doing more things better or more efficiently. Using Kerr's metaphor in chapter 2, the health and productivity of the system may be far more dependent on getting rid of the pollutants upstream than on getting more water into the river. And the pollutants upstream may be the result of the misguided efforts of a subunit of the ecosystem rather than the work of a foreign saboteur. Turning to a biological metaphor, much of what has been written focuses on establishing normative criteria for the sound functioning of each organ composing the ecosystem. One malfunctioning organ affects the health of the whole.

This ecological model for understanding, explaining, and improving our system of schooling differs sharply from the more familiar factory-production model of schooling. For the latter, what goes on in "the black box" of schooling is of instrumental interest only, that is, whether results in the form of achievement test scores are produced. Get out coal as cheaply as possible; never mind the black lung disease of the miners (which must await medical cures). For the former, what goes on in the box is opened up to display its functioning. There are multiple outcomes that are both consequences of what goes on in the now open box and consequential to what goes on in the box. Good news to the production-oriented evaluator may be bad news—indeed, a sign of pathology—to the ecologically oriented evaluator.

One can argue, of course, that the differences between these two models are exaggerated in practice. The enlightened factory owner cares about the health of the workers and often accepts reduced profits in order to assure safe working conditions. The context-oriented manager, likewise, knows that healthy workers in healthful environments are more productive. His motives are the same but are obscured by humanitarian rhetoric and actions.

This kind of argument, however, simply demonstrates how difficult it is for us to escape the dominant production-oriented model of schooling and the values accompanying it. The ecological paradigm is twisted into a basically more cynical version of the factory model.

The differences between the two ways of viewing the world of schooling are so sharp and fundamental that it is almost impossible to exaggerate them. ***The production-factory model justifies all means on the basis of their contribution to predetermined ends.*** The enlightened believer chooses more humane over less humane means when the costs to productivity are not too great. ***The ecological model justifies the functions it performs and the activities it promotes according to their inherent merit—their qualities of goodness.*** When the believer sets out to achieve a goal, he eschews those means that stand up poorly to criteria of truth, justice, and beauty. He may and should abandon the goal when the only means at his disposal fail to meet tests of goodness, rightness, and equity. Buchmann illustrates the point being made here when she writes: "If we expect teachers to prepare children for participation in a democracy, we must not neglect any opportunity for demonstrating what treating other people as moral agents means."

At the time of writing, the two largest school systems in the United States are proposing to abandon practices without reference to their commonly assumed association with achievement standards. According to newspaper reports, the New York City system is proposing to do away with grade levels in the first three years, and the Los Angeles Board of Education proposes to abandon failing marks in the first two years because of their assumed negative effects on children's feelings of self-worth. In effect, these practices are being viewed as detrimental to the health of the most important subunit of the ecological community of schooling. Needless to say, those who disagree argue their case on the importance of failure as a spur to greater effort and achievement.

The "factory" and "ecology" analogies used here to contrast two differing models of schooling and school improvement can be carried only so far. They are metaphors and only that. Similarly, several chapters refer to the culture of the school. "Culture" is used metaphorically. Clearly, a school is a very incomplete culture, lacking many of the ingredients of a true culture. Yet, the metaphor has proven useful in coming to understand the difficulties of improving schools, as well as for providing vehicles for the improvement journey.

A problem with metaphors is that they connote rather than denote. "Ecology" conjures up images of interactions in a space but does not define the boundaries of that space. We have used the term interchangeably in discussing both the relatively precise space or community called school (for example, in chapters 3 and 4) and the more elusive community of the whole system of schooling (for example, in chapter 1). The former is part of the latter.

Yet, it was my view from the beginning—a view shared by most of my colleagues, as it turned out—that the school is of primary importance and everything beyond it of secondary importance in the total ecology. This view creates an internal contradiction in that the system beyond the school takes on only an instrumental, rather than the essential, interactive significance that the nature of an ecology connotes for me. But this is because, unjustifiably, I equate "ecology" with "healthy" when, in fact, there are healthy and unhealthy ecologies.

It becomes useful, then, to maintain and expand upon the instrumental role of the ecological system beyond school. In fact, one justifies its existence according to its contribution to the healthy functioning of schools. What cannot be so justified is cut away, as one seeks to get rid of excess fat in the human organism.

Ponder for a moment what this means for accountability. Instead of holding secondary schools in compliance with state regulations governing the employment of new teachers, for example, we first ask for answers to the question of whether these regulations foster a healthy school culture. Increasingly, the system beyond schools is now called upon to defend its claims to goodness on educational grounds. In the balance of this chapter, drawing from preceding chapters, I expand on what it means for the school to be in good health and for the rest of the system to be healthful in its support of school culture as well as itself healthy.

The Healthy School

There are two senses in which a school is or is not healthy. One pertains to the qualities inherent in its daily functioning. This is analogous to such characteristics of human health as heart beat, elasticity of artieries, muscle tone, digestion, and the like. The other pertains to the social uses and significance of accumulated daily functioning. This is analogous to what humans do with their healthy state. What condition would the world be in if each person was completely and exclusively absorbed in being healthy? The question is simply a derivative of the old one of why we are here. We must continually adapt the question to schools.

Lightfoot surprised many of her readers by including the George Washington Carver high school in Atlanta as the first of her *good* high schools.[3] Only after getting into her concluding chapter, "On Goodness in High Schools," does one come to understand and appreciate her view of goodness.

> The search should be for "good enough" schools—not meant to imply minimal standards of talent and competence, but rather to suggest a view that welcomes change and anticipates imperfection. I would underscore, once again, that I am not arguing for lower standards or reduced quality. I am urging a definition of good schools that sees them whole, changing, and imperfect. It is in articulating and confronting each of these dimensions that one moves closer and closer to the institutional supports of good education.[4]

In her initial portrait of the Carver high school, she describes the mood on campus as one of order and decorum—a far cry from what had prevailed four years earlier. In the later discussion of goodness, she recounts teachers' hopes that their students will become industrious, hard-working citizens, and standards of goodness that include civility, poise, and ambition. "Carver still lags behind many other Atlanta high schools on indices that reflect the substance of education, curricular design and structure, and pedagogical process."[5]

One sees in this portrait the contextual qualities of goodness that mark a school aware of both its present health and the normative characteristics of a stage of better health ahead. In chapter 4, Heckman describes the process through which new norms evolve as a faculty seeks to take care of present problems and then moves on to new ones made evident through continuing inquiry. The establishment of this process of dialogue, decision, and action as a cultural regularity in the school environment is as demanding and exacting a criterion of goodness as can be imagined—and essential to school health. And yet, the proposal that the presence of such a process in a school be regarded as a criterion of goodness is still a radical idea!

The second sense of health pertains to the directions and vigor of movement to new norms. Schools are denied the luxury of continued self-examination, outside the context of society's expectations for them. It is in regard to this reality in particular that schools are revealed to be incomplete cultures. However, healthy schools do not passively accept every expectation thrust upon them. They have a responsibility—indeed, an obligation—to remind the community that they serve the general polity, not special interests. Information about special interests is useful in deciding how to fulfill expectations, but is not sufficient for setting priorities (see chapter 9).

Chapter 1 takes a strong position on the breadth of this nation's goals for schools, a theme picked up in chapter 3 in regard to broadening the base of evaluation to include much more than academic achievement. This position drives others: the need for a comprehensive curriculum to match these goals, varied teaching practices designed to assist all students to gain access to this curriculum, and the removal of all barriers to equal access. This agenda (and more) is what teachers "buy into" in joining a school. Sirotnik puts the matter nicely: "The term 'profession' . . . should connote the body of persons professing the best of society's educational intentions and committed to carrying them out to their fullest."

The attributes that characterize a healthy, renewing school are not well understood, either inside or outside the system of schooling. Indeed, many persons at high levels of authority inside the system view teachers "sitting around a table talking"—as one derisively phrased his image—as a preposterous waste of time. Ironically, the concept of colleagues learning from one another side-by-side in the workplace—not a new idea in schooling—is now being endorsed in the educational community because of reports of its usefulness in the business community.[6]

In the three years between release of *A Nation At Risk* (1983)[7] and the Report of the Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, *A Nation Prepared* (1986),[8] there was a remarkable turnaround regarding teachers' roles in school improvement. Careful analyses of a perceived narrowing in the scope of their decision making prior to 1983[9] went almost unnoticed in the policy arena. And there was no suggestion in *A Nation At Risk* and other commission documents that this narrowing might have contributed to the perceived decline of the nation's schools. Is it overly cynical to suggest that those who confidently invaded the culture of the school and the ecology of the system as a whole in order to put things right began to realize the complexity of the problems and the political wisdom in transferring the improvement burden to teachers?

In chapter 2, Kerr argues convincingly for empowering teachers. Both Albert Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers, and Mary H. Futrell, president of the National Education Association, have welcomed the thrust of the Carnegie Task Force recommendations regarding a more powerful decision-making role for teachers (both served as members of the task force). In endorsing a similar view in this yearbook, we highlight the responsibility that goes with this greater authority.

Principals and teachers at the site level must come to realize, then, that the empowerment we call for brings with it both opportunity and responsibility. Regarding the latter, there are two absolutely nonnegotiable correlates. First, the school as a total culture must be sensitively attuned to the social context beyond the system of schooling, not just locally but broadly. Second, the adults to whom society entrusts children and youth in schools must be connected to the relevant sources of knowledge regarding teaching and learning.

With respect to the first, much that has been written in previous chapters—particularly in chapters 3, 4, 8, and 9—is highly relevant and need not be repeated here. The issue we have referred to only obliquely, however, is that of reconciling the unique and not at all singular interests of the immediate community with the general interests of the country as a whole. This issue is particularly troublesome today with the federal stance stressing the local community character of schooling, downplaying a national perspective, at the very time when the schools are being criticized for their failure to prepare the American worker for global competition in productivity. Unless the states seize the opportunity to stress the schooling role in transcending certain divisive and parochial interests at the local level, we may well forget the school's traditional function of teaching what citizens of this republic should learn commonly.

Lukas, in discussing the travails of Boston's schools during the late 1960s and 1970s, poses the dilemma of balancing essentially two political systems:

> For seventy years this delicate balance prevailed, reassuring Americans that the demands of nationalism were compatible with the intimacies of community. In the mid-nineteenth century, the revolutionary settlement

> broke down, the centralizing impulse dashing on the hard rock of particularism. . . .
>
> In the flowering of 1960s idealism, Americans persuaded themselves that community and equality were not only compatible but mutually reinforcing principles. . . .
>
> But soon the inherent tensions between community and equality reasserted themselves. Civil rights legislation sought to override local law or custom—often equated with bigotry—in the name of a national commitment to human rights, while the poverty program encouraged "community control" as an antidote to bureaucratic centralism.[10]

I have argued elsewhere that schools, however sturdy some may appear to be in their renewing energies, are fragile cultures.[11] Further, finding direction and establishing legitimacy amidst the expectations of the immediate community on one hand and the commonweal on the other hand are extraordinarily demanding. As Andrews points out in chapter 9, there are no cookbook answers. Therefore, in the call for fundamental change, growing stronger in the mid-1980s, state directives must be clearer and support to local activity must be greater than demonstrated to date. Otherwise, one by one, individual schools will capitulate to the special interest side of the duality they must seek to preserve. Frazier argues this position vigorously in chapter 6. I repeat a point made earlier in this chapter: In the total ecology of schooling, the burden of proof regarding indispensability lies with that portion of the ecosystem beyond schools. The proof rests on whether this "rest of the system" provides the necessary support to the renewing efforts of schools.

With respect to the necessity of schools connecting to relevant sources of knowledge, Buchmann (chapter 10) carries us far beyond conventional wisdom regarding the relation of research to practice. The need is not for simply translating research reports into their practical implications. Indeed, Buchmann draws attention to the fallacies and dangers in this image. It is unrealistic to expect teachers to balance available evidence before making decisions; they must act. But it is reasonable and relevant to both individuals and schools for teachers to reflect on and learn from their decisions. Consequently, the joining of action-oriented school environments with reflection-oriented university environments can produce a productive relationship. Ward and Pascarelli discuss the possibilities and describe networks for this and other purposes in chapter 11.

However, school-university connections of the past have not provided us either with an impressive record of renewed schools and invigorated research-based inquiry or with keen insights into how the rhetoric of cooperation might be translated into such benefits. An effort to do better was launched in 1986 in more than a dozen settings in as many states. A university (in some instances, two universities) and a number of a nearby school districts—in some instances, enrolling up to 30 percent of a state's school population—have entered into long-term collaborations called school-university partnerships.[12] The intent is to create a productive tension between and among dissimilar institutions whose self-interests overlap.[13] The critical question is whether the collaborating institutions will see sufficient gain in the marriage to motivate the sharing of currently exclusive areas of turf, the candid confrontation of long-established practices that must be changed, and the necessary commitment of resources.

If empowering teachers and principals at the site is converted by these actors into maintaining the status quo and cultural equilibrium, then actors outside the school will once more feel justified in invading the school culture for purposes of improvement. The dynamic, renewing school is one self-consciously connected to society's expectations for it and to authorized convictions regarding sound educational practices.

The Rest of the Ecology

If, as I have argued, the rest of the ecology of schooling exists only to support schools in their renewing efforts, why have it? And why expand this total ecology and, in so doing, complicate the lives of those at the school site by drawing the university into it?

My response to the first question has been that individual schools, however dynamic, are relatively fragile cultures, too easily invaded by the politics of localism and particularism. The school must foster a sense of community that goes beyond family background, neighborhood, class, religion, and race. The state, in particular, has a major responsibility to see that schools do that, largely by keeping before the people and in the public dialogue the issue of what schools are for. In this, the state must also serve to protect private schools from "the tyranny of the alumni"—something states have been loathe to do.

My response to the second question has been that, paraphrasing Buchmann, the voice of science must be kept alive in the conversation about education. The production of knowledge and the weighing of knowledge in making decisions are not natural activities in schools.

The joining of universities with schools, as in partnerships, enhances the chances of such activities influencing the workplace without distorting the natural bent of both institutions.

My major argument for retaining (and redirecting) the rest of the ecosystem has scarcely been implied, let alone explicated, however. One major historiographic theory of change argues convincingly for significant readjustment in cultures emerging from contacts across borders. This is particularly the case when the coming together of cultures arouses curiosity and not the fear of destruction. But even when the intercultural contacts reveal "strange" and even distasteful alternative beliefs and ways—sufficient to intensify the ceremonial rain dances within a threatened culture—there often follows a period of introspection, accompanied by change.

Perhaps, then, literature on school change is unduly harsh with respect to the documented tendencies of school faculties to respond to pressures from the outside by drawing the wagons into circles, or so accommodating the rhetoric of innovation as to render proposed changes impotent. Chapters 5 and 8 both provide examples of the possibilities inherent in segments of the ecosystem outside of schools challenging existing regularities and then following up in such a way as to encourage introspection and reflection. Henshaw, Wilson, and Morefield deal nicely with the delicate problem of what they call "renewing equilibrium" when confronting a challenge to change. The fear of giving up current equilibrium for disequilibrium and the unknown probably creates more resistance than does the substance of something new—whether generated from within or without.

To begin to understand the foregoing is to begin to understand how significant change in schools might proceed. Analyses of the change process have been too pathological in their orientation, I believe, coming down too heavily on the side of built-in resistance among school people. Lieberman and Rosenholtz, in chapter 5, provide us with a more sympathetic picture in which teachers understandably balk at changes thrust upon them that appear to interfere with the task of educating children, which they take seriously.

My own experience with and research on change in schools brings me to the hypothesis put forward by the authors of chapter 8, namely, that the idea of school people resisting change may be a bogus one. What they clearly resist is the lack of opportunity to understand fully the nature of a proposed alternative, to explore its implications, and especially to envision the difference it would make to established ways. And, then, if the success of their efforts is to be determined solely on the basis of a rise in achievement test scores, it is no wonder that they resist.

I argue for the rest of the ecosystem, then, on grounds that may be overly idealistic. In brief, these grounds are: (a) parts of the system beyond schools—the district and the state—must serve as the prime interpreters and negotiators of schools' responsibilities to the polity; (b) authorized convictions, as held and expressed by those whose business it is to inquire into educational phenomena, must be natural components of the schooling enterprise; and (c) the role of the parts outside the school must be simultaneously challenging and supporting.

This last criterion appears particularly to be idealistic in view of heavy current reliance on mandates, excessive demands that both students and teachers meet tests of accountability, and considerable distrust among many policymakers regarding the ability of educators to deliver. Yet, the authors of chapters dealing with the state and district roles argue as strongly for this position as do authors concentrating on empowering teachers or endorsing school renewal. Of the three authors of chapter 7, two are school superintendents. They speak to "a spirit of inquiry in the district," to reshaping external mandates, and to superintendents and boards becoming "brokers of change."

Calvin Frazier is a state superintendent who, more than any other educational figure in the system, must serve, on one hand, as broker among governor, legislature, and board and, on the other hand, as a leader in the department of education's internally conflicting role of both effecting school improvement and holding schools and school districts in compliance with state rules and regulations. He comes down squarely on the third criterion while facing up to the consequences when schools are empowered to change but fail to live up to expectations. Regarding this danger, he writes: "The public must be reassured that the educational community can rise above self-interests and maintain a locally oriented, self-correcting system."

About being both supportive and challenging and the consequences of failure, he writes:

> A new state role needs to emerge from the present, overly directive pattern of educational reform. If a nurturing role fails to evolve, the system could well experience an internal decaying. . . . The message should be obvious. Those persons seeking to implement significant educational change must be aware of their obligations to do this in a framework of research, inquiry, openness, and

> collaboration. . . . It is a time for selflessness and a willingness to forego those elements geared to enhance or protect any one group or governance level.

If we are to have a healthy ecosystem of schooling, those who work in schools must do more than cut bait. And everyone else must keep the waters flowing smoothly and swiftly, free of pollutants upstream.

Footnotes

1. Thomas F. Green, *Predicting the Behavior of the Educational System* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1980), p. xv.

2. Ibid., p. xvii.

3. Sara Lawrence Lightfoot, *The Good High School* (New York: Basic Books, 1983).

4. Ibid., p. 311.

5. Ibid., p. 312.

6. See, for example, Thomas J. Peters and Robert H. Waterman, Jr., *In Search of Excellence* (New York: Harper and Row, 1982).

7. National Commission on Excellence in Education, *A Nation At Risk* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1983).

8. Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, *A Nation Prepared* (New York: Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, 1986).

9. For example, Arthur E. Wise, *Legislated Learning: The Bureaucratization of the American Classroom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979).

10. J. Anthony Lukas, *Common Ground* (New York: Knopf, 1985), pp. 207-8.

11. John I. Goodlad, *The Dynamics of Educational Change* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1975).

12. Lynn Olson, "Schools, Universities in 10 States Have Joined Goodlad's 'Network for Educational Renewal'," *Education Week* (30 April 1986), pp. 1, 16.

13. John I. Goodlad, "Toward a More Perfect Union," *State Education Leader* 5 (Spring 1986): 1, 8-9.

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